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Flags and Fridges:
an experimental approach to the relationship
between trust and implicit attachment
to the European Union

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The University of Edinburgh
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Declaration

I, Philipp Heinrich, declare

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Philipp Heinrich

Abstract

This thesis discusses an experimental approach to explore the relationship between the exposure of participants to banal visual triggers and the meaning people associate with the European Union. The study is motivated by the need for empirical contributions to the debate on public attachment to the European Union that is identified in an overview of EU integration literature.

Based on an assumption of public trust in specific EU institutions and their banal manifestations, the thesis presents an experimental approach that allows for analysis of aspects of public attachment to the EU. The study describes the exposure to well-known functional cues to acquire empirical data on how the EU symbol enhances perceptions of credibility and trust. This is realised by employing the EU energy label as a visual cue in an experimental setup.

This research specifically builds on contributions to the relationship between non-conscious exposure to visual primes and political attitudes on the one hand and the notion of 'banal Europeanism' on the other hand. The study cannot confirm clear relationships between attachment to the EU and their manifestation in banal consumer decisions as tested for in the experiments analysed. Nonetheless, it is argued that these experimental interventions can help to gain insights into people's implicit attachment to and identification with the EU, and can thus offer meaningful contributions to European Union studies.

Lay Summary

This thesis addresses the question of what the European Union means to its citizens. It shows results from several experiments that examine if people have positive feelings towards the EU, even if they do not talk about them explicitly.

Researchers are interested to know what the EU means to people, and how that can be discovered. Common methods to do this are by examining questionnaires or TV and newspaper reports. This thesis presents a new experiment as another way to learn about how people feel about the EU.

In this experiment people answered questions about a kitchen product. The researcher expected people to trust information more when it was presented by the EU. However, the study showed that people in the experiment did not react in the expected way.

The EU has seen several crises recently: After the Brexit referendum the United Kingdom is preparing to leave the EU, and the financial crisis has made people feel insecure about their future. This is why it is important to know how people feel about the EU, and how these feelings can change in the future. This study contributes to a new way to understand what people think about politics.

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1. Introduction

As the first member state of the European Union (EU) in its 60 year history prepares to depart from the union, the need to understand the factors that influence public attachment to the EU has been given new urgency. In these days, the complex process of disentangling what the different parts of the populace expect from political actors both on the national as well as on the EU level unfolds slowly and publicly. This has catapulted the academic endeavour to examine what meaning political entities carry for the wider public into the limelight of attention. The puzzle of what the EU means to its citizens is reviewed with new urgency: how trustful relationships between populace and polity can be built, where public expectations are frustrated, and what the consequences of a break-down of this relationship can be, are all questions that are eminently applicable to developing political contexts. As new questions are raised about the future of European integration, the discipline of political science and its European studies specialists find themselves able to draw upon a large body of work: In recent years, researchers have examined the meaning the EU holds for its citizens from a wide variety of angles. Important contributions have been made on the disruptive power of populist movements both inside and outside of Europe, on the integrative power of conceptualisations of European identities, and a sprawling literature on attitude formation has sought to address what matters to people when they think about Europe.

The problematic relationship between the EU and its populace is hence not new as a focus of academic attention: Just as the end of the permissive consensus post-Maastricht, the failure of the Constitutional Treaty, and the financial crisis of the late noughties have transformed the Union, the crises that have rocked the EU time and time again have also inspired new lines of research to help understand the transforming political landscape. An increased salience of EU issues in the public

debate has also seen the rise of public contestation of the EU itself, not least by influential movements endorsing Eurosceptic positions across member states. Questions about the reasons why developing EU integration seemingly failed to lead to a similar increase in public attachment to the union have since been a staple of academic work here. Whether it is the EU that is failing to convince its citizens of its benefits or if attachment is growing in less explicit, unsuspected ways, it is an issue that warrants academic attention.

Researchers have approached the question of what the European Union means to the wider public from a variety of theoretical backgrounds and using multiple methodological approaches, most notably with a focus on large-scale quantitative analyses of attitudinal surveys and corpus-based media analyses. There is, however, a distinct lack of nuanced empirical analysis when it comes to the examination of the meaning of the EU to the wider public, and the formation of public attachment to the EU. Increasingly, researchers have sought to develop alternative empirical approaches by employing experimental methods in this field. This thesis seeks to contribute to this debate, redressing this balance by presenting the design and implementation of such an experimental approach.

The renewed pressure to increase our understanding of popular attitudes on political issues, and of how the public relates to its governing elites and the institutions they embody, also brings with it a need to review how our current methods and tools can be meaningfully improved to make sense of public attitudes. The central hypothesis of this thesis is that experimental methods can provide useful insights here: experimentally, we can gain access to nuanced empirical data not available in the same manner through other research approaches. The goal here is to present the design and implementation of an experimental approach that complements existing qualitative and quantitative literature on public attitudes in the EU.

This thesis provides a detailed analysis of a series of studies that use experimental methods to examine the relationship between trust and implicit attachment to the EU. Specifically focussing on perceptions of credibility and trust in consumer scenarios, this study seeks to present insights into people's implicit attachment to the EU and to understand how these in turn can affect people's decisions and behaviour. A series of experimental interventions is presented that employs the 'EU energy efficiency label' as part of a functional visual stimulus with which participants are cued during the experiment. The underlying assumption is that through the normalisation of the presence of banal symbols in the EU in people's lives an attachment to the EU is fostered over time. This attachment, however, crucially does not necessitate explicit expression. Instead, as people grow accustomed to the presence of the EU, they draw on a reservoir of implicit attachment to the EU. For this purpose, the experimental interventions presented in this study employ a series of banal EU-related visual cues as treatment stimuli within a virtual purchasing scenario. In this experimental setting participants are exposed to a series of stimuli based around the presentation of kitchen white goods, before subsequently asked a series of market research measures. The goal of these measures is to establish if the exposure to these functional cues enhances participants' perceptions of credibility and trust. It is hypothesised that in this experimental context participants will evaluate displayed information and products as more reliable due to the treatment stimuli activating a pre-existing implicit attachment.

This thesis shows how these hypotheses can be tested, and what new theoretical insights can be gained from this experimental research approach for the field of EU studies. As such, the original contribution is two-fold: (1) by providing a novel data set with empirical data on the relationship between perceptions of trust and credibility, and (2) by reviewing this experimental approach in terms of its viability to increase our understanding of the meaning that the EU, or other abstract political actors, can have for the wider public.

To this purpose, the study takes the following structure:

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the status quo of how current research approaches conceptualise what the EU means to its citizens. It reviews key contributions and methodological social science approaches of how people relate to the EU, and how they attempt to measure this relationship. This chapter starts with a focus on quantitative approaches based on attitudinal surveys. The work presented in this section aims to measure public attitudes to and opinions on the European Union. The development of this literature to a more nuanced examination that seeks to contextualise measures of EU support is introduced here. In the second section, contributions with a media or communications focus are reviewed. These approaches draw on a mixture of discursive and quantitative tools to make sense of the role played by media representations of the EU. Based on the analyses of corpora built from various cross-sections of media discourse in EU member states, these give insights into how the EU and its institutions are commonly framed in public debate, and what representations become salient across different issues. Section three focusses on sociological approaches, combining novel and innovative qualitative approaches to acquire empirical data on the meaning of the EU to the wider public. Together, this overview illustrates the formidable breadth of approaches that allow for insights into public attachment to the EU.

To frame the issue that will be at the heart of the experimental interventions, Chapter 3 presents the concept of (institutional) trust and explains how it is understood and operationalised in this study. Starting with an encapsulated interest definition of trust, key assumptions of this individual-level concept are discussed in terms of their applicability to the institutional level. The second part of this chapter focusses on trust relationships in which those interacting lack intimacy and the trustee is an abstract political organisation. Key assumptions of thin trust and

institutional trust are explained. Mechanisms and conceptual issues are analysed in detail, particularly the controversial alignment of trust with definitions of political legitimacy. Here the hypothesis of a small but significant reservoir of public trust in the EU is discussed, which is hypothesised to emerge through normalisation of the salience of the EU in everyday life.

Chapter 4 briefly highlights the key contribution of this thesis by presenting an experimental research approach. Studies employing risk-taking and trust experiments have enjoyed marked success in psychology and economics, demonstrating how powerful visual cues can be in experimental contexts. Studies that introduce these approaches to the field of European studies are discussed: These experiments creatively explored the links between exposure to visual primes and EU identities by applying political psychology work to the area of implicit identification and attachment to the EU. This chapter discusses key methodological insights, and explores an increasing interest in the importance of routine and dispassionate forms of attachment, and the extent to which implicit, everyday stimuli have been shown to tap into these. This line of research is understood as laying the crucial ground-work for the experimental approach presented in detail in the second part of the chapter: To this purpose the operationalisation of an original experimental approach to investigate the meaning of the EU to the wider public is presented. An original design is presented that employs functional visual cues of the EU in a consumer scenario, specifically examining the impact of the EU energy efficiency label on participant behaviour. The hypothesis is that based on the implicit attachment of participants to the EU, exposure in an experimental setup to EU-related visual cues will yield different results compared to exposure to plain control cues. A complementary simulated consumer scenario that tests this assumption with measures of information reliability and product quality indicators is presented. The design of different visual stimuli corresponding to the treatment and control conditions is discussed. In the last part of this chapter, the implementation of the

experimental intervention in three sample waves is presented, including references to practical issues encountered in its implementation.

Chapter 5 presents the data and discusses the findings in more detail. Results across the two key measurement scales are presented, and details of scale creation and significance tests are discussed. Non-parametric tests are employed to accommodate the small sample size of the individual interventions, with no statistically significant differences between control and treatment condition recorded for the main quality and reliability perception indicators. Possible explanations and limitations are discussed: small sample size or the design of the experimental setup are possible explanations for the results. Furthermore, rejection of the assumptions informing the research hypothesis is also well within the scope of possibility: A potential lack of trust in the EU, or an inability to trigger this reservoir of trust as hypothesised, are also discussed.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the study. It briefly summarises the key points of the results presented before, as well as the possible avenues of explanation. The conclusion highlights the need to test novel experimental approaches and to keep gathering new empirical data to be better equipped to understand and interpret the upcoming socio-political challenges within and beyond the academic debate.

2. What does the EU mean to its citizens: Current approaches and lines of investigation

In 2005 the European Commission published an “Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe” (European Commission 2005), aimed at establishing a better dialogue between the Commission and citizens in the European Union. Encouraging the use of unified symbols, slogans, and ‘layperson’s summaries’ of important proposals it noted the limitations in how information was disseminated by EU institutions, and identified the need for improvements here as one of the main objectives for the Barroso commission. The occasion for these efforts was the failure of the draft Constitutional Treaty to obtain public support in referenda in France and the Netherlands. The action plan, soon followed by a white paper with similar focus, was only the first step in an attempt to make every member of EU institutions an ‘ambassador’ for it – and thereby make the Union more approachable to its citizens.

This journey did not start for the first time in 2005, nor did it end successfully with the above action plan and its ensuing changes (Van Brussel 2014). The double referendum in Ireland to ratify the Lisbon Treaty, waning public support for the EU in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, and last but not least the results of the UK’s ‘Brexit’ referendum with simultaneously growing support for Eurosceptic and populist movements in other member states have all highlighted gaps between the public and EU institutions.

Understandably, in the light of these crises we have seen renewed calls to improve our understanding of what shifts people’s attitudes in relation to the EU.

Vows to better understand what moves citizens in regards to the EU, what their key concerns and worries are and what motivates their support – or lack thereof – for the integration project have been a constant in the history of the post-Maastricht

EU. This is true for political actors as well as for researchers, where the wide field of investigations into public opinion and perception of the EU has been met with growing interest, working on the assumption of a crumbling permissive consensus after 1992: Both societal as well as parliamentary opposition to treaty changes beginning with Maastricht were here seen as signs for a significant deviation from the way the public previously engaged – or rather failed to engage – with the integration project and its institutions. Mass compliance with a largely elite-driven process was understood to increasingly give way to patterns of public scrutiny. The European Union was now perceived to grow not just in mere size, but also in terms of its visible impact both on grander questions of national sovereignty as well as on more banal aspects of the daily lives of its populace – and was met accordingly with growing scrutiny.

Academic interest in these phenomena, often analysed through the prism of a widening chasm between elites and public opinion on the EU, has embraced these challenges. Interpretation of the reasons behind, the nature or even the importance of falling support for the EU have been varied and numerous. The following chapter will make an attempt to illustrate three distinct approaches to the study of public perception of the EU. Starting with quantitative studies of citizens' attitudes to the EU as well as European Public Sphere literature with focus on media analyses, the summary then covers sociological approaches to the study of what the EU means to its citizens. While not representative of the full spectrum of research on what the EU means to its citizens, these broad categories help to capture the range of ways in which scholars have approached and interpreted the meaning of the EU for its citizens.

2.1 Origins of Political Attitude Research: Elite and Utilitarian Perspectives

Political attitude research has seen a marked increase in recent years, not least since researchers have observed what constitutes a move away from the ‘permissive consensus’ that the European Community could rely on in its early years. The early integrating Europe was but a “would-be polity” (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970) with limited competences and thus low public salience. A mostly intergovernmental system, thought without great influence on the daily lives of citizens, was driven by elites largely outside of the eye of the public. Slogans like the colloquial German “Hast du einen Opa – schick ihn nach Europa!” (‘If you have a grandfather – send him to Europe’) accompanied EP ‘second-order’ (Reif and Schmitt 1980) elections in the 1970s, echoing the common public perception at the time that the EU and its elections could justifiably be ignored.

The rapid pace of EU integration development in the post-Maastricht era lead to an increase in Europeanisation of powers and policies that saw institutional actors on the European level quickly grow in importance. This went hand in hand with a simultaneous increase in public contestation of the EU and its policies. Increasingly, the relationship between public support – or lack thereof – and EU legitimacy came to the fore (Eriksen and Fossum 2002; Loveless and Rohrschneider 2011; Moravcsik 2002). Similarly, the effects and consequences of growing politicisation of EU integration and Europeanisation of policies in national and European public discourses, elections, and referenda is growing (Hooghe and Marks 2012; Statham and Trenz 2015) – and even more so the study of Euroscepticism (Hooghe and Marks 2007; De Vries and Edwards 2009). In times of crises, increased contestation of the EU often equates to decreasing public support – and a considerable part of the

political attitudes literature has sought to analyse these different aspects of and challenges to public support for the EU as formulated in Hooghe and Marks's "constraining dissensus" (2012).

Early studies of public attitudes in the EU often built on the idea of cognitive mobilisation as a necessary precondition of growing public support for EU integration (Inglehart 1970). Knowledge of the EU in conjunction with the human capital to process this (Gabel 1998a) were presumed key for citizens to form an opinion on what the EU means to them – and to grow mass support for what was later to become the EU. In similar vein, Easton's distinction between diffuse and specific modes of support quickly grew in popularity in examining systematically how the public relates to political actors, focussing on concrete policy-based support or more diffuse regime-based support (Easton 1965, 1975; Norris 1999). In line with the EU's origins as a project focussed on economic integration, research emphasis here was on the output legitimacy as perceived by its citizens (Scharpf 1999): In this reading the EU is relevant to the lives of citizens in a utilitarian sense, delivering economic benefits through policy decisions that are evaluated on a societal, but primarily on an individual level (Anderson 1998; Anderson and Reichert 1995; Gabel 1998b; Gabel and Palmer 1995; Rohrschneider 2002).

The historically great emphasis that both neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist approaches placed on examining economic interests as key influencing factors of the fundamental direction of development of the EU (Haas 1958) resulted in research focussing primarily on political elite decision makers. Accordingly, before the introduction of the single market the main source of opposition to EU integration was seen as motivated primarily by elite-driven economic rather than affective concerns, often associated with a predominantly social-democratic political spectrum of actors (Marks and Hooghe 2006). However, with public opinion on EU integration increasingly salient, well-structured and

expressed both in referenda and national elections, elites on the European and national levels have to anticipate the public reaction to their decisions on EU matters (Marks and Hooghe 2006, 248). Increased public interest in the post-Maastricht era, however, did not go hand in hand with a similar increase in public support for the integration project. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty through public referenda in 2005 marks a particularly visible turning point, the permissive consensus (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970) elite actors could take for granted for the longest time replaced by a "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2009). Contentious as never before, the debate on EU integration also shows the public to be as involved as never before. Hooghe thus understands public opinion on EU integration as a "field of strategic interaction" (Hooghe 2007, 6), where party elites try to act upon EU issues made salient in public discourse or try to anticipate the effects of their actions on the domestic mood. Public opinion is thus seen on the one hand as a constraint for political elite actions, restricted to a "limited zone of acquiescence for policy choice" (Hooghe 2007, 5), while in turn motivating new elite actions.

One of the key achievements of Hooghe's contributions is to emphasise the need not to treat public opinion on the EU as a monolithic subject. As such she tackles the salient theme that elites "have pushed European integration beyond the will of the people" (Hooghe 2003, 282). The author rejects this simplified view, and instead disaggregates positions on EU integration support by actors' views on policy components, in order to then contrast general views on EU integration with support for specific policy areas in an attempt to find patterns of support (Hooghe 2003). This is achieved by comparing Eurobarometer data to cover public attitudes with a combined data set of EU- and national level elite preferences.¹ In this closer examination assumed marked differences between pro-European elites and anti-

¹ In her work she explicitly deals with methodological challenges when correlating these data sets, in particular resulting from the age difference of the different elite samples due to scarcity of comparable data. Data on preferences was gathered between 2000 and 2002 for Commission elites and the public, and 1995/96 for national elites. Eurobarometer 54.1 data was used to provide public attitude information.

European publics appear more subtle: The author finds that each group tends to support different aspects of EU integration, with elites more in favour of projecting the EU as enabling a large single market, while the general public tends to endorse a “caring EU” (Hooghe 2003, 296) focussed more on a protective social model logic.

The identified patterns only partly explain observed variance in public support, but Hooghe shows that while elites tend to be more supportive of policy areas that can be summarised as high politics (i.e. foreign policy, defence, currency, immigration), public support exceeds elite support in areas of market regulation and redistributive policies. Using the Eurobarometer’s membership and benefit indicators, national and European elites express greater support for EU integration in general than the public, but when asked about specific policy areas the average level of support of elites is not considerably higher than that of the average citizen (Hooghe 2003, 286). In contrast to elite perceptions, Europeanisation of policy areas where benefits or costs encompass several European countries finds low citizen approval, even if controlling for subjective knowledge, level of education or political sophistication.² Another explanation focusses on government spending as the decisive factor for forming support for the Europeanisation of policies, with shift of high-budget policies to the EU level presenting the biggest risks to domestic ‘vested interests’; accordingly, all groups tend to reject Europeanisation most for high-budget policies (Hooghe 2003, 293f).

According to Hooghe, a ‘social model logic’ serves as the best model to explain patterns of public EU support. This assumes that citizens want to see regulatory policies that flank economic integration and thus cushion its negative effects on the EU level. Public opinion in this model favours a selective shift of

² It is open to debate how useful it is to introduce political sophistication as a measurement to further split the public sample – after all, the reason why specific parts of cultural/academic elites are included in the national elite category is the fact that their high level of education / human capital allows for high mobility and cross-border interaction as a marked difference from the average citizen.

policies to the EU level in order to counteract perceived increasing economic insecurity and the nation states' inability to effectively deal with them. Although there is room for a more detailed debate on methodology – public support for the Europeanisation of a policy is not necessarily congruent with public support for the existence of a policy in the first place – Hooghe's work here presents an important innovation: Using the oft-cited public support deficit of the EU, she demonstrates that comparatively low aggregate support values can occlude a clearer picture of what the general public expects from and thinks about the EU.

This highlights the immensely context-specific nature of the utilitarian dimension of public attitudes towards the EU. Generally, experiences of economic crises or strains, either perceived on the societal or individual level, continue to be associated with low levels of support for the EU. In turn, where a country is perceived to be a net beneficiary of EU economic policies, mostly manifested through increased market liberalisation, especially citizens with high human capital are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of EU support by virtue of an increased ability to profit from these policies (Hakhverdian et al. 2013). The empirical evidence for a simplified split into pro-EU net beneficiary member state publics and anti-EU net contributing member state publics is mixed though, suggesting economic cost-benefit analyses are just one important piece that citizens consider when evaluating the EU. Within the national contexts, positive performance evaluations of national level institutions have been shown to be associated with lower levels of support for the EU regime independent of macro-economic considerations (Anderson 1998; Rohrschneider 2002; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2006). Dissatisfaction with national institutions in turn has been shown to be associated with a higher propensity to endorse Europeanisation of powers, while a high satisfaction with national institutions exacerbates concerns about the democratic functioning of EU-level institutions (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). Generally speaking, where subjects perceive their respective national contexts as less economically successful, in turn economic

evaluations of the EU's success grow in relative importance, whereas for participants in successful national-level economic contexts other institutional performance criteria become relevant when it comes to expressed levels of EU support (Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014; Rohrschneider and Loveless 2010). In other words, if people think of the EU as merely a means to achieve economic growth, or if they primarily see the EU as bringing about institutional changes depends on both sociotropic as well as egocentric economic and institutional evaluations.

2.1.2. Public Attitudes and European Identities

With exclusively economic cost-benefit analyses insufficient to explain different levels of public support in its entirety, researchers have increasingly included an affective dimension of support in their analyses. As such, one explanation examines EU integration and the Europeanisation of powers formerly found on the national level as a potential threat to citizens, particularly in conjunction with national identities. In this view, people perceive of the EU as a threat to their attachment to the nation, a threat that is manifest both economically as well as culturally (McLaren 2002, 2004, 2006). Particularly useful to explain overt hostility towards the integration project, the author here uses survey items to measure participants' perceived threat through cultural or religious minorities as predictors for lower EU support. Carey (2002) includes a more explicit relationship between the EU and a perceived threat to national identity in his measurements, similarly cautioning that an absence of public EU support can in part be explained by the perception that the EU is responsible for the erosion of national self-determination. In this view, Eurosceptic sentiments are not merely accidentally correlated with negative attitudes towards immigrants and other minorities, instead the EU is perceived as causally related to fostering these identity threats.

In similar vein, Hooghe and Marks emphasise the importance of including more than just a mere “calculus of economic costs and benefits” (Hooghe and Marks 2007, 120) in the analysis of public perceptions of the EU. They highlight that with only a minority of citizens evaluating economic consequences of integration in detail, the public is more easily reached by appeals to exclusive territorial identities (Marks and Hooghe 2006). This goes hand in hand with the phenomena of populism – an increased public acquiescence sought by national political elites – as well as politicisation, bringing about an increased media salience of EU related issues as well as an increased engagement of both political parties as well as the general public on such issues (Hooghe and Marks 2012). The authors highlight in no uncertain terms the great importance they attribute to the ‘causal power of identity’, and argue for governance to be understood as an expression of community in order to better understand the path that EU integration is taking: Accordingly, they stress the importance of recognising that these sentiments of community – e.g. in relation to its territorial scope – are often not necessarily congruent with a ‘functional need for (...) cooperation’ (Marks and Hooghe 2006, 247). It is precisely because people are deeply passionate about who exercises authority over them (and by extension on what institutional level) that tensions in the political arena arise – and for the case of the EU it is this ‘causal power of identity’ that lies at the heart of many of these tensions.

The authors also stress the importance of distinguishing between inclusive and exclusive national identities, arguing that not all forms of national attachment by default lead to lower levels of attachment to the EU (Hooghe and Marks 2004). For them political elites play a crucial role in influencing socialisation and social construction of national identities, deciding ultimately whether or not citizens subscribe to more inclusive concepts of identity and thus lean stronger towards supporting EU integration. This powerful relationship between identity and EU support is, however, not unidirectional; instead, the complexity of the observed

phenomenon leads the authors to conclude that national identity is Janus-faced: While sometimes contributing to higher levels of EU support, it is most prominently strongly negatively correlated with public support when expressed as exclusive national identity (Hooghe and Marks 2004).³ Especially considering this strong impact of exclusive identities, the authors highlight the necessity of further research on the social construction and mobilisation of identities to augment existing economic theories of preference formation.

In addition, the authors note that relatively rapid jurisdictional change has been paired with relatively stable identities within the EU, with this tension increasingly salient and mobilised by political actors (Hooghe and Marks 2012). The connections between (national) identities, cultural and economic insecurity on the one and the impression of salient EU-related issues on the other hand can be constructed and “is most influential for individuals who do not have strong prior attitudes and for attitudes towards distant, abstract, or new political objects” (Hooghe and Marks 2012, 847). Hooghe and Marks thus deem public opinion particularly susceptible to priming (making a political object salient), framing (connecting something to a political object), and cueing (instilling a bias). Especially for people who conceive of their national identities as primarily exclusive, top-down cues can lead to the deepened perception of EU integration as incompatible with existing national attachments. For the authors this effect of the increased salience of EU-related issues in domestic politics is at the heart of an increased heterogeneisation of public attitudes on the EU.

Examining this relationship between community attachment and support for the EU is notoriously challenging: Hobolt and de Vries (Hobolt and de Vries 2016) highlight the importance of refining appropriate research methods here, not least

³ As expected, these levels of support furthermore vary across different countries, with the negative impact of exclusive nationality smaller in countries where political elites are less divided or radical right parties are less prominent.

because it can be challenging to distinguish conceptually whether it is public EU support that can explain affective attachment to the EU, or vice versa if existing EU identification in turn makes it more likely for people to express favourable attitudes. In addition, questions about the extent to which conceptually identification with Europe or as European can be treated as interchangeable instruments have been raised (Cram 2009b, 2011). The fact that a large majority of public attitude studies rely on Eurobarometer data is understandable given the convenient unparalleled access to a representative, cross-national data set, and in untangling this complicated relationship allows thus for similar convenient direct comparison of the relative explanatory power of the different models proposed. However, as a tool established by the EU itself it is still the expression of an introspective evaluation of the EU's own relationship between populace and polity. Overreliance on Eurobarometer data is a flaw endemic to public attitude research where the EU takes on the role both as research administrator as well as object of study (Höpner and Jurczyk 2012). In more practical terms, the drawback of restricting research on this complex relationship to a small number of generic survey items – usually the ‘membership’ and ‘speed of integration’ indicators – has resonated in the past (Bechtel, Hainmueller, and Margalit 2014; Boomgaarden et al. 2011), but is still a common hallmark of EU public opinion research. By necessity this narrows the conceptual focus reliant on the validity of a single set of instruments to do justice to a rapidly evolving socio-political challenge.

For members of the public it is increasingly difficult to reliably attribute responsibility for policy actions and consequences given the growing complexities of the multi-level governance system that drives EU integration, and the world beyond. In the case of the European sovereign debt crisis, born of the banking crisis in 2008 and itself an important yard stick to examine fluctuating levels of public attitudes (Hobolt and Wratil 2015), holding the EU responsible seems only easy on the surface. In a power-sharing system of governance that is rapidly evolving and increasingly preparing to embrace integration sub-projects at different speeds,

traditional democratic means of holding political actors accountable are threatened by this growing complexity (Hobolt and Tilley 2013, 2014). In similar vein, for researchers the EU continues to be a moving target: As our understanding of the complex interplay of public attachment to the EU both as dependent and independent factors grows, so must our conceptual lenses adapt (Hooghe and Marks 2008; Marks and Hooghe 2006).

Increasingly, different political actors vie to be seen as suitable representatives of public attitudes towards the EU, shining the light on debates on their preferred course of EU integration and where the reality deviates from these preferences. As public salience of EU integration and attachment to the EU grows, the conceptual lens can be refocussed to target an area of research particularly geared towards the examination of how and where these processes of public contestation unfold. Accordingly, the following part of this chapter will review literature on public spheres in the EU, and studies concerned with the meaning of Europe as constructed in the European public spheres.

2.2 The EU in the Media: the European Public Sphere and Media Analysis

The European Public Sphere approach contributes to our understanding of how the wider public relates to the EU and focusses on media coverage in its diverse forms as a crucial link between political elites and the EU's populace. Conceptually building on Habermas' (1991) notion of *Öffentlichkeit* - or public sphere - in recent years a rich body of literature concerned with the Europeanisation of national public spheres and the (potential) establishment of a European Public Sphere (EPS) has gained traction. As a prominent part of empirical European integration studies a close analysis of public communication and intermediation in relation to EU integration and

governance remain at the heart of the explicit goals of EPS research (Trenz 2005, 408).

2.2.1 From Public Sphere to EPS

Habermas' work on *Öffentlichkeit* (Habermas 1962, 1991) conceives of the public sphere as a space important to the development of a society, where issues of significance can be identified and reacted to by non-state actors, and where "collective identities and need interpretations can be articulated" (Habermas 1996, 308). Habermas' early contributions originally focused on a national bourgeois public space (Preston and Metykova 2009, 34; de Vreese 2007, 4) and were criticised for their reductionist focus (Dahlgren 1993; Fraser 1993; Garnham 1990; Negt and Kluge 1993). Other criticisms include an over-reliance on homogeneity and consensus within the public sphere and inadequate attention to emotions and actions. Habermas himself, as well as the strong body of research literature inspired by his work, addresses many of these criticisms. This has sparked a substantial body of research, focussing on the transformation of the public sphere(s) in the increasingly transnational world of today (Calhoun 1992; Crossley and Robers 2004; Fraser 1993; Iosifidis and Wheeler 2016). Particularly with reference to the EU public sphere, conceptualisations have been found highly useful and have since spawned a vibrant field of study (Baisnee 2007; Boomgaarden et al. 2010; Ferree et al. 2002; Kunelius and Sparks 2001; Salvatore, Schmidtke, and Trenz 2013; van de Steeg 2006, 2002, Trenz 2004a, 2005; Trenz and Eder 2004; de Vreese 2007).

The public sphere is usually conceived of as a forum, where communication takes place between politically affected citizens discussing topics of common interest referencing similar structures of meaning, thereby linking civil society to the state (Eriksen 2005, 342; van de Steeg 2002). Adapted to the EU context, a European Public Sphere (EPS) is commonly envisioned as a dynamic and heterogeneous

arena for public deliberation and engagement that (potentially) functions as a source for public legitimacy for the polity. It is thus an arena where discourse on the EU, its policies and associated actors can become salient. At the same time it functions as a (potential) source of legitimization of – and for some authors: identification with – the EU. Accordingly, a significant part of the literature is concerned with contrasting the normative functions projected on the EPS with empirical media analyses to ascertain the existence and strength of such legitimising effects.

Krzyżanowski et al. (2009, 4) define the EPS as a “transnational arena of communication where social, political, institutional, cultural and economic actors voice their opinions and ideas which are then discussed, distributed and negotiated (...)” Trenz (2005, 411) paraphrases the Habermasian conceptualisation of the public sphere as a “critical space of intermediation and communication that is open to the participation of everybody, in which issues of common concern are discovered, discussed and processed and in which a specific communicative power is created that holds government accountable.” It is thus understood as an ‘engine of democratisation’, and for the European Union a crucial prerequisite “for better governance, legitimacy and citizen’s participation in the emerging European polity” (Trenz 2005, 408). Beyond this legitimising function, some researchers also see the EPS as a key determinant for developing EU identities, where through the EPS normative values that are central to the legitimization of different (collective) identities can be “mobilized to construct various forms of (...) pan-European collectiveness (...)” (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak 2009, 5). Actors, although physically separated, through interaction in EPS deliberation participate in processes of Europeanisation where values and ethics are negotiated, shared and spread (Risse 2010a; Risse and Grabowsky 2008).

Applying the notion of the public sphere to a transnational level, however, is not without problems. As the EU lacks several features of national public spheres,

theorizations of a 'thick' EPS in a sense of a coherent, singular, pan-European public sphere as a space with a shared identity and a transnational media system have been found inadequate and too ambitious (Habermas 2001, 2006; Kielmansegg 2003; Kleinstüber 2001; de Vreese 2007): The EU is "not a community of communication, hardly a community of shared memories; it is merely (...) a community of shared experiences" (Kielmansegg 2003; cf. de Vreese 2007, 8). The lack of identification and pan-European discourse as well as the lacking European-wide infrastructure that could support a cohesive thick EPS form part of a deficit that impedes the creation of a truly transnational public sphere in Europe (Eriksen 2005, 358; Scharpf 1999, 187). Against this monolithic 'heavy' EPS scholars have thus proposed varying conceptualizations of 'realist' or 'light' approaches, where processes of Europeanization, as manifest for instance in the media sector, are regarded as the most probable force towards development of a EPS. In contrast to work on ideal-type heavy EPS models contributions here seek to provide empirical data to benchmark EPS progress along the lines of nation-state building experiences: Necessary conditions for a EPS are thus assumed to be the establishment of a shared space for communication through a common language and topics and its institutionalisation through a media system (Ferree et al. 2002; Gerhards 1993; Trenz 2005).

2.2.2 The EPS and media analysis

EPS literature commonly defines the Europeanisation of national public spheres as an increased gravitation towards similar topoi tied to the EU project, resulting in higher "parallelization and synchrony in topics and an increase in salience of European issues and actors" (de Vreese 2007, 11). The EPS is accordingly seen as highly fragmented and sectoralized, with Europeanization processes present in

some sectors and less so in others. As EU policies do not affect the everyday lives of all EU citizens in the same manner, the immediate meaning of the EU and its actors is not uniform and as such also does not prompt uniform citizen engagement or interest. In a similar vein citizen membership in the EPS is not necessarily congruent with static geographical descriptions of the EU: instead, engagement is gradual, often unstable and fluctuating. Accordingly, not all citizens of the EU are automatically members of the EPS (Baisnee 2007, 500).

Where citizens do engage on EU issues though, a functioning EPS is assumed to provide a framework that enables the polity to (re)connect with its populace and helps to overcome an assumed public disenchantment with the EU and its associated actors (Habermas 2001; Trenz and Eder 2004). Preston and Metykova see it as a measure to countermand the “failure of political imagination to construct a precisely political vision, mission or myth that reaches beyond the (...) elites to engage with and mobilize major social groups” (Preston and Metykova 2009, 43). The assumption here is that within a functioning EPS, building on gradually Europeanised national or sectoral public spheres, an open space for public deliberation on EU-related issues is created on a transnational scale. This ‘thin’ EPS then can function as a space to capture and deliberate the meaning of the EU to the wider public, with these evaluations – positive as well as negative – ultimately contributing to further the legitimisation of the integration project. A key challenge for EPS research then is, accordingly, to elaborate the extent to which citizens hold beliefs about the political system or policy actions in the EU, because this engagement is ultimately a key driver for consent and thereby legitimacy (de Vreese 2007, 7).

EPS research has predominantly sought to verify this by focussing in their empirical analyses on media actors in the EPS. Following Luhmann’s stipulation that “whatever we know about society, or indeed about the world in which we live, we

know through the mass media" (Luhmann 1996, 9), media actors are simultaneously seen as important instruments for informal public control while at the same time functioning as more abstract 'market places' of ideas and statements – a canvas on which images of Europe are painted (Carpignano et al. 1993; Curran 1991, 2002; de Vreese 2007). Although the EPS is seen as highly fragmented and difficult to predict in terms of its future development, media actors are seen as crucial links to hold and potentially bring these fragmented public spheres closer together, or alternatively even as the embodiment of the public sphere (Brantner and Langenbucher 2006; Erbe 2005; Grimm 1995; de Vreese 2007).

2.2.3 EPS and Transnational Content Analysis

Research on the EPS covers a variety of different normative perspectives on how the public sphere(s) in this context should look to "make democracy work in the EU" (Trenz 2005, 408). Among others, these include contributions with a focus on historical precedents, the shaping of public attitudes by media discourse, and debates on transparency and legitimacy in an EPS context. Trenz himself endorses a particular form of transnational content analysis, building on the crucial role attributed to media actors as mediating instances between institutions and publics in theorisations of the public sphere. The object of these analyses is the salience of specified aspects of EU policies, associated actors or their actions and how these are framed. The key assumption here is that a better understanding of the EPS ultimately leads to a better understanding of the EU's democratic performance and resulting interaction effects with how the European publics relate to the integration project.

Trenz emphasises the need to employ formalised models in order to approach the Europeanisation of public communication, highlighting the importance of distinguishing analytically between the integrative aspects and the (related)

legitimising role that aspects of a working EPS can fulfil. As a practical focus for his transnational content analysis he suggests three basic functions to be considered by including both negative and positive public evaluations of the EU:

According to the visual or informative function of the EPS it should “make Europe visible and understandable to the general public” (Trenz 2005, 412). The analysis should here focus on political actors and institutions in the EU, as a functioning EPS is assumed to bridge the information gap between these actors (and associated elites) and the wider public. Furthermore, as a recipient of information these institutions can contribute to better governance where the EPS is functioning, thus contributing to legitimising the integration project.

A further key function of the EPS relates to the communicative interaction between political elites and the wider public, and the extent to which these interactions are procedural and responsive. A key challenge here is to not merely record statements sent out by relevant actors, but to investigate the extent to which these messages are received, according responsive actions formed, and ultimately whether connections are made between the institutional actors and audiences. Trenz explicitly points out that EPS research here can meaningfully fill the gap that survey-based public opinion research leaves, going beyond descriptive tasks to show “how public opinion is made and diffused in the European Union” (Trenz 2005, 412). Analyses of aggregate media data can be employed here (Diez Medrano 2003), but still needs to be meaningfully related to attitude formation on the micro-level.

The last – and arguably most controversial function of the EPS – is one tied to representation and identification. With collective identity construction depending on public communication, Trenz sees a functioning EPS as a necessary condition for the construction of a European identity. Understanding European identity as a projection developed in public discourse, imaginations of European unity are assumed to be tied to specific semantic patterns of the social representation of Europe. It is to note

that even where the potential for identity construction on the basis of the dissemination of these common patterns in media discourse is challenged, it is nonetheless a key aspect of EPS research to elaborate on these common patterns of representing the EU, its actors and thus the meaning attached to Europe.

2.2.4 Media Analysis in a Fragmented Public Sphere

EPS literature frequently employs analysis of national quality newspapers for empirical data collection, where researchers' primary focus is on the patterns of Europeanisation in news coverage on selected issues within national public spheres (Trenz 2005, 410). Quality newspapers are often considered the "backbone of the public sphere" (Habermas 2008), in that they provide analytical and opinion-making functions crucial to the "discursive vitality of the public sphere" (Habermas 2008). And while they heavily restrict both access and free flow of ideas through gatekeeping, in a world where information is theoretically limitless this is also the reason why they are able to provide valuable filter and condensing functions. As such they are able to achieve high visibility, which is invaluable when it comes to the effective dissemination of information in fragmented national public spheres. In combination with the ease of access of the final products in the form of texts, this makes them an important target for researchers.

At the same time it is certainly true that newspapers – especially quality newspapers with a limited elite audience – are "problematic proxies" (Risse and Steeg 2003) for public opinion and debate. With declining readership numbers and increasing fragmentation of popular news media sources, empirical data gathered from these proxies alone will continue to depreciate in its explanatory power. Textual and audiovisual data from both traditional as well as new media sources is used increasingly in EPS research. While national media today are unmistakably key to

understanding the EPS, other sources, such as speeches, demonstrations etc., are equally valid – although often less accessible – components of the public sphere (Baisnee 2007). Especially with the increasing popularity of online media, overemphasis on traditional media actors risks an inadequate depiction of the EPS. Recognizing that traditional media actors do not steer the EPS or are unilaterally in charge of its development, constraints in regards to the selection of media sources have long been recognised (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000; van de Steeg 2002; Trenz 2004a). While public news media and quality newspapers are still the most important media actors when it comes to the diffusion of EU-related information, increased deregulation of national media regimes, and with it increased fragmentation of media consumption, is thus a challenge that increasingly needs to be taken into account for EPS research.

Consequently, it is common today to find EPS research based on elite interviews (Van Brussel 2014) as well as multi-method approaches that seek to combine analyses of both interview and traditional media analysis data. Conrad (2014) presents such an approach, combining both interview data gathered from journalists reporting on EU-issues as well as analyses of a corpus of articles from daily newspapers in Germany and Sweden. Set up to capture data on distinct events in recent EU history, the author combines empirical data from the Constitutional Treaty crisis and the ensuing reflections on the state and future of the EU, as well as a speech of then German foreign minister Fischer on the ‘finality of EU integration’ and the importance of a leading core-Europe for the project. While reserving different data sources for different topical foci prevents the author from drawing easy comparisons, this diligent approach nonetheless allows for a more complete picture about the state of public EU perception to be drawn.

An even more ambitious project with a distinct longitudinal aspect was recently presented by Hepp et al. (2016): Their focus on the changing patterns of

EPS characteristics as explained through journalist practice, as well as how citizens in turn relate to these EPS patterns, allowed them to contrast empirical data gathered on the text-production (journalist level) with data on text-reception (audience level). Spanning analyses in six EU member states over the course of 12 years, the study combines content analyses of a corpus of newspaper articles between 1982 and 2013, over 200 interviews with journalists analysed in conjunction with twelve participatory newsroom observations. This was then set in context with audience-level interviews and associated media diaries, as well as interaction analyses of 28 web forums. While topical focus varies by necessity due to the often marked time differences of the gathered data, this versatility in combining different empirical data sources allows for a remarkably dense picture of EPS interaction. The drawbacks of this approach are obvious at the same time: while especially the data on what meaning audiences associate with the EU in this media context is inarguably valuable, the need for resources for a project of this scope demonstrate the natural practicability limits that modern EPS research has to face.

2.2.5 EPS Research: Selected Empirical Approaches

Considerable variety in terms of the applied empirical methods comes with the considerable variety of conceptualisations of Europeanised Public Spheres. Often, different parameters of these national public spaces or differing understandings of relevant Europeanisation processes are presented. Accordingly, achieving comparability and compatibility of different research approaches has been referred to as one of the key challenges for current EPS research (Esser, Stromback, and de Vreese 2012; de Vreese 2007).

As a starting point, Gerhards (1993, 2000) lays out two key criteria by which the presumed increasing Europeanisation of national public spheres can be

determined. In a quantitative dimension, the number of media reports on EU actors or EU themes can be reported. Within a predefined time frame an increased number of reports can – within given constraints – be seen as an indicator for growing Europeanisation. The degree of EU affiliation of actors as well as categorisation of themes by EU competences can allow for a more nuanced evaluation of available data. In a qualitative perspective, Gerhards focusses on the extent to which the recorded themes or actors are reported on from a perspective of actors – e.g. countries – other than of the reporting source (Gerhards 2000). It is assumed that increasing inclusion of coverage paying attention to reactions from other EU member states – especially dissenting ones – can serve as further indicators of increased Europeanisation of public discourse. Trenz – although critical of Gerhard's definition of the qualitative criterion – argues for a necessary focus on these two dimensions as a result from a public sphere deficit, translated into a communication deficit, where "in qualitative terms, public communication in Europe lacks the basic understanding and agreement that distinguishes a political community and marks its competence for democracy" (Trenz 2004b, 292).

Trenz presents this work as an investigation into known agglomerations of political communication – national public spheres – that act as focal points for this research. Likening the connections between these national public spheres to a metaphorical road network, emphasis is then placed on the users of this road network, the intensity as well as the schedule patterns of its use. In describing the patterns of communication in the EPS, Trenz emphasises that his main intention is not to test the veracity or quality of these claims of involved actors – but instead to merely unearth and understand these patterns (Trenz 2004b, 294).

With an explicit quantitative focus on the empirically verifiable status quo of the EPS, the author focusses on coverage of European governance and policy making in Germany, France, UK, Italy and Spain. Using articles from different quality

newspapers, he seeks to describe the structured patterns of political newspaper coverage on Europe, and to detail the extent to which these patterns converge or diverge within the selected sample.

Whereas the first aspect is of strictly quantitative character requiring analysis of the (relative) visibility of relevant communication vis-à-vis the rest of the published communication, the second element of his analysis is concerned with the context-dependent connectivity of (political) communication on the EU. For the empirical analysis the relevant indicators for both elements are operationalised in the umbrella term of resonance: “The minimal requirement of such a public sphere is that communication is structured. These structuring effects of public communication are measured in terms of the public resonance it creates” (Trenz 2004b, 294).

2.2.6 Framing Europe in the EPS: The EU as a democratic and economic actor

Researchers have also approached the issue of how citizens make sense of the European Union by focussing on the various frames employed to represent the EU in the public sphere. Originally inspired by psychology literature emphasising the importance of mental representations of reality for the explanation of behaviour (Tversky and Kahneman 1981), these analyses focus on how elite discourses shape public frames of reference about the EU and EU integration, and how these impact public attitudes to the EU (Diez Medrano 2003, 2009, 2010; Diez Medrano and Gray 2010). Employing content analysis methods as popularised by Koopmans and Statham (2005; 1999), these contributions focus on patterns of EU framing rather than on differences between national public spheres only. They contribute to the EPS debate with tentative evidence for a “shared political culture within Europe” (Diez Medrano and Gray 2010, 218).

Much can be gleaned from what the authors refer to as ‘minority frames’ from specific national public spheres. However, they are quick to emphasise the similarities between national public spheres on how Europe is portrayed: “the most relevant story to be told of the European Union is one of similarity” (Diez Medrano 2010, 316). Building on earlier findings from a qualitative analysis of editorial newspaper contributions (Diez Medrano 2003), the authors identify two key frames in their analysis of filtered samples of the public sphere debate on the EU in Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK, Switzerland, and Poland as published between 1990-2004 (Diez Medrano 2009, 2010; Diez Medrano and Gray 2010).

The first of these frames sees the EU represented as a democratic actor, identified by its propagation of and subordination to key democratic values. In the analysed corpus, EPS debate primarily seeks to associate democratic values and their expression in institutional actors with the EU, with the ‘community of values’ as a salient point of reference. These conceptions remained diffuse though and were usually devoid of further clarification. Additionally, the possibility of a de-ethnised conception of Europe with reference to an assumed universality of these values remains an area of contention, and was seen to be gradually changing, especially under the impression of public events and EU-enlargement after 2001. Prompts of representations centred on these values were not necessarily positively connoted: While framed as a project both grounded in and perpetuating democratic values, this image of Europe was highlighted particularly where the EU’s contentious enlargement or the democratic deficit was the focus of debates.

The second key representation of the EU is as an institutional actor with a primarily economic focus voluntarily formed by democratic countries. References here focus on its economic influence, with debates about the Euro, European enlargement, and European Central Bank policies prompting the framing of the EU as a market founded on the aforementioned values. With slight variations as to the

aspects emphasised in different national public spheres, largely these representation of the EU in the EPS centre on the EU as a guarantor of economic growth and stability (Diez Medrano 2009, 2010).

The authors note that the above frames dominate to a significant extent how the EU is represented in the public sphere for political as well as media and civil society actors. Differences between these types of actors are noteworthy primarily where the relationship of the EU to its citizens or the architecture of the EU itself is criticised. Criticising the EU, especially in terms of how it relates to and how accessible its institutions are to its citizens, is more common for media actors, while the structure and characteristics of the EU are more commonly contested by national political elites: "The surrender of sovereignty, the transfer of competences to supranational levels of government, and the subsidiarity principle are the three major traits of this polity about which public actors seem most concerned" (Diez Medrano 2009, 96). Mentions of the potential transfer of competences, sovereignty, or even the formation of a political union appear infrequent and often remain diffuse and lack detailed specification; a majority of political actors supports the sharing of competences between the EU-and state-level in principle while shying away from endorsing further transfers of sovereignty. Where political actors more vehemently express support for political union, this concept largely remains unexplored as to its detailed construction. Different actors also conceive of the function of a transfer of competences in different ways, with political elites largely concerned with improving the EU's contribution to economic performance indicators, while civil society actors tend to support notions of a 'social Europe'. The author sees this contrast as representative of a larger public-elite conflict, which in conjunction with the emerging split between elites on the issue of a transfer of sovereignty is one of the key challenges for the EU manifested in the public sphere (Diez Medrano 2009, 2010).

2.2.7 Framing Europe in the EPS: The cost of low-visibility Europe

A key observation in these contributions is that publics match the elites' lack of interest in deepening integration by transferring more sovereignty to the EU-level, with a lack of pragmatic interest in the EU resulting in relatively low visibility of issues of EU integration in the public sphere (Diez Medrano 2010). A large number of articles deal with policy and interstate bargaining debates that the author refers to as 'mundane', as they do not leave space to debate subjective images or coherent claims for the larger direction the integration project should move into. As the public debate on the architecture of the EU – both current and future – remains comparatively shallow, this lack of visibility in turn leaves space that for example fringe political actors can exploit: Leaving citizens without satisfying levels of information about how political elites position themselves vis-à-vis the integration project and its future aims, this vacuum makes it easy to associate EU policies with other grievances that matter to citizens. Where elite conceptualisations in the public sphere of future EU integration remain shallow and devoid of specification, these are prone to trigger resistances among segments of the public that see themselves as alienated, where growing cultural diversity and the economic impact of globalisation are met with concerns (Diez Medrano 2009).

De la Porte and van Dalen (2016) present findings that come to a similar conclusion. In a longitudinal analysis of a corpus of media articles published between 2000 and 2010, they focus on the Europeanisation of the media debate on the EU's socio-economic strategy (EUSES) in Denmark, France, Poland, and the UK. Originally known as the EU's Lisbon Strategy and later as Europe 2020, this is a key strategy by the EU to increase economic growth and employment and thus to positively impact people's lives. This could arguably be meaningful to the wider public when it comes to the perception of the EU, with the EU's efforts measurably reverberating in the public sphere. The authors in their findings though report high

vertical Europeanisation only, i.e. a framing of EU coverage driven by EU actors themselves with only low reference to and only diffuse contestation of related debates in other national public spheres (horizontal Europeanisation). Other studies with different topical focus report similar findings of low horizontal Europeanisation of national public spheres (Drewski 2015): Despite the EU's specific efforts here it is not meaningfully associated with bringing economic prosperity in the context of the analysis. However, the authors suggest that the true impact of EU actors' activities is obfuscated in the EPS representation, with a shallow level of analysis by media actors and ineffective slogans employed by EU actors allowing references to the EU to be dropped when the effects of EU policies are represented in the media. Particularly in more Eurosceptic media contexts this not only makes it harder to track the discursive construction of the EU in the EPS, but more crucially points towards a lack of meaning that citizens associate – and are able to associate – with the EU even where de facto policy impact would suggest otherwise.

Empirical and methodological limitations are here intertwined. Low visibility of frames associated with the European Union can be due to the ineffectiveness of EU actors to have meaningful policy impact on the lives of its citizens and receive matching public recognition. These may also, however, be due to insufficient rigor of media actors involved in covering these impacts – or simply failing to capture representations of the EU adequately with the selected tools. Research into EPS framing of Europe can only partially explain how citizens conceive of the EU and the reasons behind the widening public-elite gap, as certain actors remain largely invisible in the media debate on the EU (Diez Medrano 2009). The examination of media representations is usually an examination of representations formulated by elites. Optimistic expectations in regards to a potential greater involvement of peripheral civil society actors in EPS discourse on Europe have largely not been substantiated in empirical studies, with evidence suggesting that the 'openness' of debates to these peripheral actors is markedly less specifically for European topics in

contrast to national ones (Ferree et al. 2002; Koopmans 2010; Wessler et al. 2007). Notable in this regard are analyses on online EPS manifestations, where non-elite actors' contributions are slightly more likely to be encountered (Koopmans and Zimmermann 2010; Michailidou and Trenz 2010). Recognising the substantial changes in the modern media stemming from increased fragmentation and competition, the examination of political self-understanding and of how citizens conceive of their polity in the EPS will remain a challenging task in the future.

Note that this chapter by necessity can only give a restricted overview of different methods and research foci present under the umbrella of EPS research. The highly cyclical nature of EU news coverage (Boomgaarden et al. 2010; Semetko, de Vreese, and Peter 2000; Trenz 2004b) as well as considerable national variations (Salovaara-Moring 2006; Saurwein, Brantner, and Dietrich 2006) further complicate drawing an accurate summary of all complexities involved. The slowly growing salience of the EU in different national spheres has tentatively been linked with growing EU competences, even though empirical evidence is mixed here (Gerhards 2000; Koopmans and Erbe 2004; Wessler et al. 2007). Specifically times of crisis though seem to resonate within the EPS, with Statham and Trenz (2015) reporting on the importance of 'emergency politics' in a EU crisis context. Even here, awareness of and attentiveness to the EU remain diffuse. Deliberate shielding of controversial issues from public debate here in turn sees a decline in salience of elite actor positions, giving room to new media and political actors to counter established elite discourses. Where governments and mainstream parties attempt to retreat to a 'depoliticised' form of expert governance, they in turn open the field for marginal parties and other less resourceful actors. This resonates with an original account of the EU's democratic deficit from an EPS perspective (Seoane Pérez 2013), suggesting that it is less an insufficient amount of media coverage or poor communication by the EU itself, but instead rather an issue of publics feeling disconnected and deeply removed from political elites. These issues of perceived

distance and failed attachment is an area that warrants further examination from another group of contributions, presented in the next part of this chapter.

2.3 Public Perception of the EU in Sociological Perspectives

The third group of publication relevant here are explorations of the meaning of the EU from a sociological perspective. Other than for the previous parts, the common thread here is less strictly a methodological one. Instead, the breadth of contributions summarised as sociological works below employ a wide variety of methods and are geared towards variegated aspects of the relationship between the EU and publics. In that way the studies named below are cited as sociological works, even where their authors would not necessarily identify as sociologists *prima facie*. The common thread for these studies is more than that they do not neatly fit in the previous categories though: Through their methodological and topical innovativeness they have provided notable contributions to our understanding of the relationship between public and the EU, specifically with a sociological dimension in mind.

The first study leaves its mark by making an impact despite – or because of – a comparatively simple research design. In “Europe in the Political Imagination” (White 2010), the author examines the basis for a bond of citizens to the EU based on a pragmatic project-based rather than an explicit identity-based conceptualisation. Contributing thus to the wider normative debate on Europeaness,⁴ he examines empirical data gathered from taxi drivers in the UK, Germany, and the Czech Republic, collected during banal social interactions. Inviting participants to participate in semi-structured group discussions, he recorded qualitative data grouped in terms

⁴ The author maintains that his study is explicitly not a contribution to the normative dimension of this debate – but arguably by contributing data on the potential viability of one such conceptualisation he still contributes an important puzzle piece.

of people's expectations of agency and explanatory motifs. Important for the author was here to give his participants space to let them establish which of these motifs were important to them; instead of (pre)imposing categories he allows for his subjects to highlight relevant aspects. The result is a highly insightful if niche qualitative dataset on how his subjects conceive of political community with reference to the EU.

White then focusses on the ideational background of participants, underlying patterns of perception that have the potential to enable or constrain consent towards the polity (White 2010, 1035). In theory, it enables political participation where people can perceive and then engage with the EU and the projects it delivers in a positive way, reinforcing the perception that it delivers relevant benefits to its citizens from which in turn then political legitimacy could grow. The author cautions though, as the patterns of discourse he identifies as pervasive among taxi drivers are quite different: the EU is only one of the political actors that draws criticism, but it is not perceived as an actor able to address substantive concerns of its citizens. Especially regarding the economic dimensions the author describes a sense of fatalism among his participants, where the EU is seen as enabling the negative effects of globalisation. If this reservoir of credibility really is a necessity for long-term EU legitimacy, he concludes, the public acceptance of the EU will struggle.

The innovative sampling of this study as well as the immediate connection the author was able to draw between the everyday experiences of his subjects and the way these were framed in respect to wider issues of EU legitimacy was one of the inspirational starting points for this study: White cites prominently the widely held assumption that citizens need some form of positive utilitarian benefit evaluation of the EU in order for EU legitimacy to be sustainable. By contrasting these theoretical assumptions with novel empirical evidence, even though limited in its generalisability, his contribution shows well how innovative studies can provide key impulses to the academic debate.

Another author to provide stimulating empirical evidence to the question of what the EU means to people is Favell, most notably with his seminal 'Eurostars' (2008) study, but also with some of his later contributions both on mobility as well as on how to situate these empirical sociological contributions in the wider debate (Favell 2010, 2014; Favell and Guiraudon 2009; Zimmermann and Favell 2011). A highly original study, "Eurostars and Eurocities" portraits 'free movers' in London, Brussels, and Amsterdam, all of which the author deems "hubs of European free movement" (Favell 2008, xi). With the author granting insights into the lives of these 'eurostars' that are both unusual for a sociological contribution as well as ultimately surprising, Favell develops a nuanced and captivating portrait of 60 trailblazers of European integration: a group of people who have voluntarily left their nation-states, are educated and highly skilled and have established themselves in one of these eurocities to reap the rewards.

That is not to say that these 'eurostars' are primarily motivated by material concerns: According to Favell, despite the individually different histories a common motivation for these 'eurostars' is their desire to transcend nation-state 'containers', perceived as traditional boundaries for developing personal identities and lives. A profound cultural curiosity and a sense of adventure tend to predominate over economic reasons to migrate; instead the author uncovers a surprising ignorance of concrete material opportunities available to these 'eurostars' in their destination of choice. Experiencing this act of migration as a conscious choice to experience new freedoms rather than a primarily economically motivated decision is then what sets Favell's 'eurostars' apart from other, larger populations of migrant workers.

Favell also highlights the often transitory nature of 'eurostar' migration: with problems and costs often only revealing themselves over time, and emotional investment in respective adopted societies often low, 'eurostars' find themselves socially adrift and reconsidering their decision to migrate. On a collective level, the

impact of 'eurostar' migration thus remains low, with the potential of transforming Europe through this type of intra-EU migration remaining largely untapped, falling short of a formation of a critical mass of 'eurostar' citizens to fundamentally transform host nation-state societies. Favell concludes that contemporary nation-state societies remain resilient and ultimately removed from even the most curious 'eurostar' minority, a persistent challenge to EU integration and those looking to the EU as guiding inspiration to pursue their lives outside of their original nation-state conventions. As reviewers have pointed out, Favell provides ample reasons why the EU will not become a successful 'assimilation machine' like the US (Messina 2009), and instead delivers a harsh reality check for those uncritically advocating for this new class of young professional 'eurostars' (Butler 2010). These trailblazers are then only on the surface the successful embodiment of the EU's political free movement dream: they mainly socialise among fellow 'eurostars', their lack of local connections even puts them under comparatively high pressure on the job market, and also affects their social lives. Not all of those issues are unique to these 'eurostars' – in a way these European expats experience vulnerability from increased economic exposure in the single market in a similar, if slightly exacerbated manner as their native middle class counterparts.

One of the most notable facets of the empirical insights Favell's study provides are the striking similarities between the 'eurostars' even where they hail from different countries and professional backgrounds. They share the common goal to move to and establish themselves in a different European country, readily embracing the self-identification as cosmopolitan cross-border movers who are deliberately performing being different from their 'stayer' compatriots. The author here offers key insights into what the EU means practically for the everyday reality of his subjects: Even if Favell's subjects do not explicitly evaluate the EU in the same way, the union is still the central focal point that allows these trailblazers to realise their desire: to move abroad and realise their (professional) aspirations in a different country. In this

way they are the positive 'poster boy' embodiment of EU integration, and accordingly for Favell's 'eurostars' the EU here takes on two meanings: One as the functional origin from which the new European freedoms are derived. The union is here the legal point of origin that bestows these freedoms on a new generation of citizens, and enables them to make use of these rights across member states. Secondly, it carries symbolic meaning, where as people have these legal rights bestowed on them they are also empowered to redefine their identities, performing their 'eurostar' identity both vis-à-vis their new native neighbours as well as the 'stayers' in their original home countries. In this positive reading of Favell's study, to his subjects the EU is an empowering force bestowing tools to organise one's life according to one's wishes.

As this meaning is shared among members of this niche stratum a unifying power across nationalities is derived from it. In a way Favell's study can here serve as a projection space for the relationship between the construction of meaning of the EU and its long-term legitimacy. Of course it is valid to examine if the unifying power of the EU across nationalities in this regard also has the potential of being replicated in other social strata. This issue of scope is one of the questions that Favell (indirectly) raises: is the power this positive meaning of the EU unfolds in people's lives only an experience that members of a small mobile elite share? Following from this, does it make sense to focus on examination of citizens' attitudes to the EU more along social strata across member states than by grouping them primarily by nationality? A second issue Favell's study raises is one of the sustainability of this positive attachment to the EU: The 'eurostars' are living embodiments of the European freedoms, the EU for them is much more than just a beneficial actor that addresses their relevant needs. And yet, the insights Favell provides suggest that these success stories have an expiration date as 'eurostars' encounter similar difficulties in establishing themselves in different member-states long-term. If even elite groups high in human capital encounter these problems, how resilient is the potential of positive public attachment to the EU for the general population? Favell's study cannot

answer these questions conclusively, but by shining a light on the lives of ‘eurostars’ he introduces these nuanced concerns into a debate that greatly benefits in contrasting these empirical insights with established theoretical assumptions.

A theme hinted at in these first two studies is taken as a more explicit starting point for Gaxie, Hubé, and Rowell (2011): Aimed at understanding and explaining public attitudes towards the EU, they embrace the assumption that the EU as a political entity is simply not commonly at the fore of people’s minds. The focus of this project was on a French sample of participants, but also included comparisons of public attitudes of subjects in Germany, Italy, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The main source of information here were in-depth semi-directed interviews that emphasised open-ended questions, giving participants space to expand on issues relevant to them. Other qualitative methods incorporated in this study include focus groups, analyses of citizens’ letters to newspapers, and responses to online questionnaires by EU-related organisations, the latter two labelled as spontaneous citizen interventions (Gaxie, Hubé, and Rowell 2011, xii).

The authors see their study explicitly as a complement to – and in parts an improvement on – quantitative survey-based approaches, including the Eurobarometer studies and secondary analyses building on studies with closed-ended measurements. Accordingly, they stress the importance both of recruiting a sample of subjects that may be easily missed in established quantitative measures, and to employ according open-ended methodological tools that allow for a representation of complexity in the description of attitudes towards the EU that they feel is often lacking in quantitative analyses. This, in their words, more realistic depiction then stresses the ambiguity and diversity of public attitudes towards the EU. This holds especially true where they are constrained or enabled by factors such as level of education, level of politicisation, or national experiences. As one of their findings they note how ill-defined the references to the EU are for large parts of their

sample, with different levels of familiarity begetting corresponding levels of surety or entitlement to speak on the issue: E.g., the authors argue that where people are less self-assured about the EU as object of reference, these resulting evaluations should see a different level of significance attached even if formally similar to other more focussed claims. For instance, the authors show that theoretical utilitarian motivations are only relevant for certain segments of their sample: high human capital or a high level of politicisation are here linked with the acceptance of theoretical macro-economic considerations, but for intermediary strata these links are recorded only where exposure to concrete regulatory actions by the EU is available. The less immediate the individually perceived presence of the EU, the more diffuse attitudes towards the EU become especially for working-class subjects. As a result, the authors observe significant heterogeneity of attitudes towards the EU, often unstable and ill-fitting to prepared categories derived from established theoretical models.

The finding that positions on the EU, and accordingly both support for the EU as well as its absence, are not necessarily tied strictly to European issues at all is not entirely surprising. On this basis though the authors call for more responsive methodological approaches that avoid artificial 'homogenisation' of what people make of the EU – and why. They highlight in particular the need for nuanced new methods that are aware of the varying levels of access to political debates on the EU – or, to rephrase, methods that are mindful of less explicit sources of evaluations of the EU.

This includes attentiveness to the possibility to overestimate the explanatory power of European identity – something that is echoed in the writing of Duchesne. Based on substantive earlier writing that includes quantitative examinations of the interplay of national and European identities (Duchesne and Frogner 1995, 2007, 2008), the authors highlight the necessity to examine the issue of European attachment from a different methodological angle. In a substantive cross-national

project the authors centre their approach on focus group analysis of subjects' interactions, placing emphasis on recruitment from different segments of society. This methodological shift is designed to be most responsive to examine this affective dimension, with surveys ill-equipped to record the necessary participant perceptions (Duchesne et al. 2008, 1). The authors here are cautious when it comes to the salience of the EU and EU identity as highlighted by their participants: when subjects are given the methodological space to expand on the issues that are important to them, European issues and signifiers of explicit European identification feature less than expected (Duchesne 2006). The result of this project, even if simplified to considerable extent, is one of pervasive public indifference towards the EU and the integration project as the best way to describe how citizens (fail to) conceive of the EU (Duchesne et al. 2010). Reflecting on conceptualisations of European identity and their relevance in this context, Duchesne emphasises the importance of more nuanced empirical analysis of how citizens experience Europe, and what factors in terms of their national contexts but more so in terms of their socio-demographic backgrounds are factors for successful cognitive mobilisation (Duchesne 2008).

Duchesne's warning call not to assume that European identity will ever be (Duchesne 2008, 407), more provocatively rephrased as "European identity does not exist" in later presentations recommends a focus for a future research agenda on European Union attachment that was influential in the design of this study: This thesis explicitly sets out to contribute to the understanding of public attachment to the EU without examining public identification with the EU – and indeed, the methodological choices and implementation presented in the following chapters do not allow for any results to be interpreted as a direct comment on the explanatory power, or lack thereof, of conceptualisations of EU identities. At the same time, this is not to discard the considerable contributions that have been made in the field of EU studies by these approaches focussing on the construction and effects of EU identities. Conceptualisations of EU identities have been suggested varyingly as nested

(Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001), cross-cutting or as a multiple identity 'marble cake' model (Risse 2003, 2005, 2010b). This question of how these supranational identities could or could not find accommodation with people's respective national identities is to this day one of the dependably controversial foci of the debate. Anderson's eminently quotable work on imagined communities (Anderson 1983) arguably facilitated the launch of this debate that saw key ideas of social constructivism introduced, and has spawned works of varying optimism on the possibility and pervasiveness of EU identities (Bruter 2005; Checkel and Katzenstein 2009; Cram 2011; Grimm 1995; Kielmansegg 2003; Laffan 2004; McLaren 2004, 2006). While recognising the heterogeneity and importance of these contributions to the field, this study cannot adequately cover the full breadth of this debate. This decision not to engage with this literature to a larger extent in this study is not due to an implied judgement of the relevance of identity-based approaches, but rather one born out of methodological considerations. With the conceptual lens chosen for this thesis it is by design that this study can speak only to implicit forms of attachment, but not to explicit dimensions of EU identification.

In similar vein this chapter makes no attempt to be a comprehensive review of approaches with a sociological background that have informed the debate on the sources and effects of the public construction of meaning of the EU. For instance, Fligstein's contributions on the limited pervasiveness of EU identification and his prognostic 'Euroclash' (Fligstein 2008; Fligstein, Polyakova, and Sandholtz 2012) have recently received renewed interest in the light of current political developments. Newer contributions have responded to the concerns that sociological publications have been late to address substantive issues of EU integration (Favell 2017), and provided updated accounts of the meaning of the EU in times of EU disintegration (cf. in particular Delanty 2017; Outhwaite 2017). To reiterate Duchesne's earlier caution, for a discipline to stay relevant one has to keep adjusting dominant working hypotheses and research approaches in order to be able to record and examine

existing realities as accurately as possible. Seeing that the contributions covered here are just a minute selection of the relevant academic debates, these worries can be put aside for now.

Instead, the following pages will focus on developing an original contribution to these debates: Before detailing the concrete inspiration and manner of implementation of the experimental design at the heart of this study in chapter four, the next chapter will first elaborate on the concept of trust in political institutions as employed in this study.

3. Trust and Trusting in the European Union

This chapter presents an overview of trust in general and institutional trust specifically, examining different concepts as to their usefulness for the purpose of this study and laying the theoretical groundwork for the experimental approach discussed thereafter. In particular, the author here suggests a theoretical approach based on an ‘encapsulated’ view of trust as suitable for this study. The first part of this chapter examines key concepts that are usually applied to individual level definitions of trust, but with focus on the scope of this project the author discusses how these retain relevance in the context of trust in institutions. The second part of this chapter presents an overview of institutional trust and aims to clarify issues of interdependence with notions of legitimacy and other forms of social trust. Emphasis is placed on elaborating a conceptual approach to institutional trust that can be applied to the study of the European Union as suggested in this study. The objective is then to present reasons for the extent to which examinations of public trust in EU institutions can usefully inform further empirical work, especially where blanket notions of public support and perceived legitimacy of the EU remain controversial.

3.1 Trust – basic concepts

Relying on others is a key part of social life. Seldom are our everyday actions in today’s society devoid of some form of reliance on others. Sometimes we rely on individuals, sometimes on organisations; other times we rely on hard-copy contracts, or even only on vague promises. Reliance on others, however, adds to the uncertainties we face in decision-making: how accurate is the information I base my

decision on, how reliable is the person who promised me help? How much do I stand to gain from this interaction, and is the added uncertainty worth it to obtain my goals?

One crucial mechanism to deal with this uncertainty is trust. Trusting others, and making decisions based on trustworthy others, are of crucial importance to reduce complexity and allow for effective action. Trust is a common recourse in scenarios where decision-making takes place without being in possession of a full account of all relevant information – a common situation given that even assessing what constitutes all relevant information in a given context can be very challenging. Trust, manifest in a high number of our day to day interactions is a mundane but key part of our social order, and a highly useful tool to “grasp the events of daily life” (Garfinkel 1963, 190). Within our complex societies, trust in the most general sense can be understood as the “expectation of the persistence and fulfilment of the natural and social orders” (Barber 1983, 9) – in other words, an expectation of an element of social continuity and predictability. This chapter seeks to clarify some central assumptions about the use of trust in this project before moving to the notion of institutional trust specifically.

There is still considerable debate on how best to conceptualise the phenomenon of trust (Hardin 2002, 2006; Levi 1998; Levi and Stoker 2000; Uslaner 2002, 2016). Providing comparative perspectives to empirical research across academic disciplines remains a daunting task due to nuanced, but significant, ambiguities in how trust is employed (Misztal 1996; Nuijss 2002; Schweer 1997, 2000). Even within the same discipline a lack of conceptual clarity is not uncommon (Hartmann and Offe 2001). Key contributions on trust informing a political sciences perspective are numerous (Beck 1986; Giddens 1990; Luhmann 1988, 1989; Misztal 1996; Shapin 1994); in various contexts trust has been tied to and investigated in concert with forms of communication (Garfinkel 1963, 1967), informational uncertainty (Frewer et al. 1996), brand loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001), or

regulatory measures (Braithwaite and Levi 1998b; Gambetta 1988; Levi 1997; Shapiro 1987). As a crisis of public confidence or declining social capital through an increasingly individualised populace, lack of trust has also been identified as a problem on the societal level (Pharr, Putnam, and Dalton 2000; Putnam 2000).

In this study, trust in general is understood as a reciprocal and procedural social interaction, where someone transfers control over actions, resources and accordingly outcomes on the basis of expectations that are not necessarily covered by personal experiences or current information (Coleman 1988; Kaina 2009). This lack of information is key –in situations of complete information trust is not necessary. As a social tool it only becomes relevant where it enables one to act in the absence of complete information.

3.1.1 Encapsulated Interest Definition of Trust

This study builds on an 'encapsulated' view of trust as outline by Russel Hardin (Cook, Hardin, and Levi 2005; Hardin 1996, 2002, 2006, 2007). Hardin suggests using a model of trust that focusses on the relationship between truster and trusted through the prism of interests, interests that in turn shape the extent to which a truster might perceive a potential partner as trustworthy. In other words, all interactions within a trust relationship are taken on the basis of what participant want or need.

This sets the stage for a wide applicability of the concept of trust since interactants' interests can be conceived of at a very basic level. The more basic the need, the larger the group of people who could potentially act upon this interest in a meaningful manner. However, not all instances of potential trust relationships actually end up being realised.

To this end it is vital to keep notions of trustworthiness and trust separate; often attempts to define trust actually end up defining the conditions under which one appears trustworthy (Hardin 2006).⁵ To clarify how trustworthiness effects trust in others, this view of trust is grounded on a twofold assumption: First, the (potentially) trusted has an interest in actively maintaining a relationship with the truster. Be it to strengthen social or professional ties or simply to strengthen ones reputation, the trusted has a vested interest in preventing the relationship to deteriorate. Secondly, it is this interest that in turn incentives the trusted to act in a trustworthy manner towards the truster. Trust is thus defined as a relationship between people based on interests and marked by direct reciprocity.

Where the truster expects certain benefits or actions of the trusted, on the other side the trusted's compliance is based on his interest to maintain the relationship. In order to appear sufficiently trustworthy, the trusted crucially takes the truster's interests into account as their interests – he encapsulates the truster's interests in their own. For the time of the relationship, the trusted treats the truster's interests as equal to their own: He endeavours to act on these new goals not because he expects an immediate benefit from reaching these goals for himself, but because compliance allows him to demonstrably fulfil the truster's interests, and in reliably doing so he is able to distinguish himself as trustworthy.

Crucial for the truster are here not the (potentially) trusted's interests per se, but specifically whether or not his own interests are sufficiently encapsulated within the trusted's interests. Accordingly, the view of trust taken in this study is commonly referred to as the 'encapsulated interest definition of trust' (Braithwaite and Levi 1998b; Hardin 2002, 2006, 2007; Levi and Stoker 2000). Important to this interest-focussed definition of trust are further aspects that are clarified below.

⁵ Contingent on this, being in a 'state of trust' is thus a derivative of 'perceiving someone as trustworthy'.

3.1.2 Trust as a Cognitive and Contextual Concept

While trust is an important tool to deal with uncertainties, in order to distinguish among potential partners between trustworthy and untrustworthy ones, access to specific and reliable information is key. A theoretical scenario where perfect information is available does not require interactants to trust; on the other hand a complete lack of information makes it impossible to distinguish between untrustworthy and trustworthy actors (Levi 1998). Trust as a tool can enable us to deal with uncertainty brought on by the lack of information, but it becomes only relevant in scenarios that are neither completely unpredictable nor fully deterministic.

A crucial stipulation of the view of trust taken here is that it is not a choice to trust in someone. Instead relevant knowledge constitutes a given actor's degree of trust (or distrust). Once sufficient information about a potential partner is acquired, it is not a choice as to whether or not to regard this partner as trustworthy (Hardin 2006, 18)⁶ – it is precisely the knowledge of someone's trustworthiness that constitutes trust in an actor. To trust someone is to possess sufficient knowledge of someone and someone's motives, which in turn is necessary to make reliable predictions about someone's behaviour in a cooperative relationship and his regard for the truster's interests. Familiarity with an actor is often positively associated with trust because it entails knowledge of trustworthiness (or lack thereof), which in turn constitutes trust in the same actor. Although vernacular use as well as definitions of 'trust as action' envision trust itself as a deliberate choice, acting on trust should not be conflated with trust itself. Here trust is still seen as a cognitive concept, acknowledging the fact that acting on trust – once a potential partner is regarded as trustworthy – can very well be

⁶ Note that other authors (Sztompka 1999) disagree here and denote the act of trust itself – and not just the actions taken on the basis of trust – as a choice.

a choice. However, crucially there is no automatic exigency that presumes an action must always, or immediately, follow when a trust relationship is formed.

A second important cornerstone of this conceptual approach that pays dividends to the complexities of trust is envisioning this phenomenon as a contextual one: In cooperative interactions based on trust, trustworthiness of potential partners is evaluated within a given context and respective to a given goal – trust is here deemed contextual or goal-oriented. In other words, trust is understood not merely as a relationship between individual A – the truster – and individual B – the trusted, but instead as a relationship where A trusts B to deliver a certain goal X. The truster regards his partner as trustworthy only in respect to his competence to deliver a certain goal, and is confident that the trusted will sufficiently encapsulate the truster's interests specifically within the respective context. Thus in this encapsulated interest view of trust, trust is understood as a three-part relation between truster, trusted, and specific context. Trust is not an open-ended extension of confidence between a truster and a trusted, but it is contingent on the type of relation, relevant context and a host of other circumstantial factors (Cook, Hardin, and Levi 2005; Hardin 2002, 2006).

Crucially, these assessments of trustworthiness vary depending on context – someone who is regarded as trustworthy to deliver in a particular business venture will not necessarily have the same trust extended towards her or him in other unrelated social matters. The fact that these assessments change drastically depending on membership – both formal and informal – in different professional or social networks is an important pillar for the organisation of modern life. A relationship with a co-worker, a medical practitioner, and a fellow member of a sports-team can all be characterised by trust, but in each case the partner will be trusted with compliance on different issues and in different settings. These conditional constraints still apply here even if they are not always made explicit by interactants (Hardin 2002, 61).

It follows that cases where interactants manifest open-ended trust – where trust takes the form of a context-independent ‘two-part relation’ between truster and trusted – are atypical: Akin to the proverbial Abrahamic trust to deliver anything under any circumstances, only in rare cases does one extend ‘unconditional’ trust towards another individual. These are usually confined to highly intimate relationships not characteristic of most social interactions, and only peripherally relevant to the discussion of trust in society. Instead, commonly one will trust a relatively small number of individuals in respect to larger, more important actions or goals, and a larger number of individuals with comparatively minor or less impactful actions. As networks – social and professional – have become both more numerous as well as more specific in modern societies, so has the opportunity for individuals to foster multiple memberships in and contacts within these networks increased. The increased number of potential partners thus available for context-specific trust relations offers an important advantage: For in the case of default, disappointing trust becomes less of a life-threatening and only a contextual risk.

3.1.3 Risks and the Limits of Trust

Risk is inherent in every trust relationship, either through placing trust in someone untrustworthy or where the trustee unilaterally exits an existing trust relationship. As Gambetta puts it, “for trust to be relevant there must be the possibility of exit, betrayal, defection (...).” (Gambetta 1988, 218–19). Accordingly, the crucial difference between trust and confidence can be framed as one of control: where an actor has complete control over (or exact knowledge of) outcomes, he can be confident of these – where he lacks control over the interaction, he can find recourse in trust (Luhmann 1979; Seligman 1997, 2012; Yamagishi and Misumi 1994). Risk is thus an inherent element of cooperative interactions based on trust, a problem that

Luhmann likens to an economical exchange when he refers to the risk of ‘advance payment’ (Luhmann 1989). Trusting always entails the risk of an actor not reciprocating as expected after an initial investment of resources to the benefit of the trusted. This is especially true as trust interactions are usually time-delayed or asynchronous interactions, where it is common for one party to make a commitment in advance without receiving a personal benefit immediately after. The second party commonly will fulfil their part of the commitment only after one party has already committed – often significant amounts of – resources.

Even where an actor has identified someone as sufficiently trustworthy as per their encapsulation of the truster’s interests within the trusted’s interests, trust interactions run the risk of breaking down. The limiting factor here is self-interest, where the trusted’s own interests might still trump the truster’s encapsulated interests: the trustee then will have to make a choice of whether or not the continuation of a trust relationship is beneficial, where the trustee continues to act on the encapsulated interests of the truster. Alternatively a different action more congruent with his own interests could present itself more beneficial to them within a given context. In order to not risk exploitation by (mis)placing trust in an untrustworthy actor, it is not enough to estimate an actor’s interests – but also the relative weight one can expect the trustee to place on their own interests vis-à-vis the encapsulated interests of the truster.

Beck famously places risk and our capacity to deal with our vulnerabilities in cooperative interactions at the centre of his work on trust in the ‘risk society’ (Beck 1986, 1992; Misztal 2012). This study embraces this view where with growing complexity and increasing risks, our vulnerabilities and our desire to not have these exploited are increasingly relevant. Our dependence on others, the unpredictability of action, and the irreversibility of human experiences all stand to exacerbate our vulnerabilities in interactions, but can – in part – be navigated with trust-based

mechanisms like promises, informal social contracts or other ways of signalling security and respective parameters for the relevant interaction.

An effective way to minimise risks is then to invest in estimating a potential trustee's interests and their desire to encapsulate one's interests, allowing the truster to formulate their expectations vis-à-vis the trusted and their interest to act cooperatively. An actor's expectations hinge upon the reasons for believing that the trusted actor will fulfil the trust and act cooperatively, with the key element for these reasons usually being the desire to uphold cooperative relationships – be it for financial or other palpable benefits, for emotional reasons, or for reputational effects on other relationships (Hardin 2002, 2006). Where an actor has no reason or incentive to act and no specific interests to pursue, their actions become unpredictable within the context of an interaction. Where a person's actions become unpredictable, he cannot be trustworthy. Similarly, if potential trustees are perceived to be unable to evaluate the effects of or potential long-term benefits from these cooperative actions, there is similarly no ground for a trust relationship.

This presentation of the concept of trust can only serve as a brief introduction to this complex notion; for the multitude of different variations in trust interactions between individuals a more detailed account would certainly be necessary. However, within the context of this study the focus here is on institutional trust specifically – a term that itself comes with a host of other conceptual challenges that are the focus of the following paragraphs.

3.2 Trust in organisations, trust in institutions

With the concept of trust as complex as it is, numerous contributions have sought to contribute to our understanding of trust relationships beyond individual

face-to-face interactions. Where interactants lack the intimacy and thus knowledge of their respective partner in situations open for cooperative interaction, the nature and mechanisms that allow for effective establishment of trust relationships will invariably differ. This is even more so the case where it is not only lack of opportunity for direct physical interaction that defines these relationships, but where the potential trustee is not a single defined individual, but instead more abstract – e.g. a social group, an organisation or political institution.

This chapter presents a selection of the contributions on forms of trust where the individual is not the sole object of trust anymore – instead, focus lies on how best to define ‘thin’ and specifically institutional trust. Without ignoring the practical as well as conceptual challenges this entails, the objective of this chapter is to provide arguments for the importance of these forms of trust in general, and presents how they can improve our understanding of how the public relates to political institutions in general and the European Union specifically.

3.2.1 Forms of trust: From thin to institutional trust

A variety of useful contributions highlighting conceptual differences between different forms of trust have rightfully gained popularity. Among them, work on rational versus communal trust (Braithwaite 1998; Braithwaite and Levi 1998a), generalised versus specific (or particularised) trust (Hooghe and Stolle 2003; Uslaner 2002, 2008), instrumental versus social trust (Delhey and Newton 2003; Tyler 1990, 1998) or moralistic versus strategic trust (Uslaner 2002, 2008) have emphasised different dimensions of societal trust interactions. Without disputing the meaningful contributions stemming from work on the above concepts, the most fundamental distinction between different forms of trust necessary when shifting attention away from interpersonal interactions to explicitly include political organisations such as the

European Union is one that distinguishes between a generalised thin trust as opposed to an interpersonal thick trust dimension (Putnam 2000; Yamagishi and Misumi 1994).

The latter is commonly used to refer to trust relations between persons that one has personal knowledge of and immediate contact with, usually family members, friends, work colleagues etc. This type of trust is based on what Granovetter terms 'strong ties' (Granovetter 1973) and the resulting familiarity, with higher thick trust placed in people we interact with most closely. Trust here mainly stems from personal knowledge allowing one to form direct evaluations of trustworthiness (Uslaner 2002; Williams 1988). Communities exclusively built on this type of trust tend to be socially homogeneous, exclusive, and isolated (Newton 1997) and are not generally representative of modern democratic societies.

In contrast thin trust describes a more abstract mode of trust relevant to the social interactions within modern societies. Sometimes used as a de facto umbrella term for some of the more specific notions of trust listed above, thin trust assumes that trust relationships can be founded on weak ties that connect us to the people around us – ties that exist even in the absence of first-hand knowledge of the preferences or goals of the prospective partner. This concept of trust is readily applicable to present-day societies where the vast majority of citizens available for interaction are strangers to each other, but still find it necessary – or beneficial – to engage in cooperative ventures together. This is true for polities such as the European Union where out of a body of citizens of over 500 million people day to day interactions among strangers are common, and social tools and mechanisms are necessary to allow for effective interactions even in the absence of 'strong ties'. Where it is common for the parties to these interactions to lack direct personal knowledge of each other to base evaluations of trustworthiness on, thin trust becomes a necessary recourse to deal with the ensuing uncertainty.

Invariably the nature of the potentially trusted defines the type of trust relationship: Where thick trust is generally pervasive in relationships of relative homogeneity of actors, thin trust grows in complexity with increasing diversity of modern societies, and comes in many different variations. As such, trust relationships between individuals differ from trust in political authorities or institutions. Accordingly, whether trust interactions are focussed on fellow citizens (on a horizontal level) or on elites or institutionalised authorities (on a vertical level) is a crucial distinction of different forms of thin trust. Embracing the distinctions between horizontal and vertical forms of trust as put forward by Putnam (2000) and Newton (2008), social trust is here understood as the horizontal component of thin trust and defined as the trust in or attitudes towards other citizens. Political trust on the other hand is used to describe thin trust relationships in a vertical direction, defined as a set of beliefs that assumes that those in political authority will not only do no harm, but are also predisposed to encapsulate one's interests through appropriate action in the political sphere.⁷ Note that while the notion of political trust is perfectly adequate for the scope of this contribution, at the same time it is not meant to suggest that vertical trust relationships e.g. between citizens and non-political elites are inherently or necessarily different to those relationships explicitly covered by the narrower term political trust.

A further distinction is necessary between vertical thin trust that focuses on individual political leaders and a type of political trust focussed on political institutions. Where the object of trust is an individual representing a political party, a government or another type of political authority, evaluations of trustworthiness will be based on (personal) knowledge of people, social types or applicable social situations. On the other hand, vertical thin trust with a focus on political organisations or other institutions will be dependent on the truster's evaluation of the structures and

⁷ Note that albeit a basic and somewhat crude definition of political trust, this is explicitly compatible with Hardin's contributions on encapsulated interests (see above) as well as contributions from Warren (1999a) and Gambetta (1988) that emphasise assumptions of beneficial or non-malicious intent.

systems, the rules and practices that these institutions in turn base their operation on (Giddens 1990; Listhaug 1995; Listhaug and Wiberg 1995; Luhmann 1979, 1989; Seligman 1997). It is not unusual for both types of trust to be conflated, and it can be common in some cases, e.g. where leaders of national governments or political parties are marked by high media salience and pars pro toto evaluations lead to habitualised conflation in the public sphere. Nonetheless, trust in institutions and political trust in individuals in principle are separate phenomena even if they do not function fully independent of each other. Evaluations of personal trustworthiness can be conceived as more akin to trust evaluations in horizontal interpersonal trust relationships, with evaluations of institutional trustworthiness based on knowledge of structures and rules and their application in political practice (Dalton 2004; Fuchs, Gabriel, and Völkl 2002).

Theories of institutional trust must thus account for the case where trust in a particular political leader is low but trust in political institutions at the same time high – while at the same time addressing the question of interdependency between institutional and other forms of thin trust.

3.2.2 Mechanisms of institutional trust

While both individuals as well as institutions can be trustworthy, trust itself is something exclusive to natural persons. When we lament decline of trust in governments, this is in fact a – presumed – decline of trustworthiness of governments, or of individual authority-level actors associated with its institutions. As for the case of interpersonal forms of trust, a theory of institutional trust need be concerned with institutional trustworthiness, and the tools and mechanisms by which this measure suffers or thrives. Building on the encapsulated interest perspective presented above, of key concern here are then the processes and dynamics that

allow for an institutional actor to be perceived as a credible defender of relevant public interests within a specific political context. Levi provides a definition of institutional trust that fits with this approach: "Institutional trustworthiness implies procedures for selecting and constraining the agents of institutions so that they are competent, credible, and likely to act in the interests of those being asked to trust in the institution." (Levi 1998, 80)

Institutional trust, in the view presented here, is the declared belief that agents of a given governmental institution are trustworthy. There are few mechanisms unique to evaluating the potential trustworthiness of people representing political institutions. As in other interactions, distrust is easier sown than trust is created or regained; in political arenas feeding distrust by highlighting past transgressions or broken promises has seen strategic use. On the other side of the coin, political leaders can appear trustworthy as a function of their track-record, through consistency in their actions, or through a demonstrated willingness to act for a given set of principles. Relying either on first-hand evaluations or – more commonly – third party information, character and action of a politician are considered in his or her reputation: "Trustworthy leadership is an effect of charisma, the demonstration of effectiveness, and the willingness to take an ethical stance in spite of determined and vocal opposition and potential costs", (Levi 1998, 86). Evaluating the trustworthiness of political authority in this manner is a resource-intensive task, especially where the trustees are usually far-removed, and necessary third-party information has to be carefully evaluated as to its veracity. Additionally, when moving beyond the most salient authority figures it is a demanding task in itself to assess who the relevant political elites are that may have relevant impact within a given context. In order to be reasonably sure that a government or set of political leaders is trustworthy, a citizen has to make a considerable investment of resources in order to monitor and 'enforce' the government to act according to expectations. In practice, this is not always possible.

The pressure either from balancing high resource expenditure or high risks here can in part be met by shifting focus away from the authority and towards the regime level. Political institutions evaluated as trustworthy by their respective publics provide useful benefits when it comes to managing risks and resources: where the institution is trustworthy, associated individual political actors are more likely to be evaluated as trustworthy as well. Where specific behaviour is enforced or where political actions are more likely to be aligned with specific sets of preferences by merit of being embedded within an institution context, citizens who are asked to trust have the option to focus on regime-level evaluations of trustworthiness alone. As a function of effectiveness, the consistence of and perceived ability to provide outputs creates reputation effects that apply to political institutions in a similar manner as to political authorities. Reputation effects and (credible) commitments that representatives of political organisations make will accordingly contribute to citizens' evaluations of a government as trustworthy, as these are self-enforcement mechanisms qualified by an intrinsic incentive to comply (Levi 1998).⁸ Other than in interpersonal trust relationships though, here it is not just the lone trustee who has a vested interest in maintaining their reputation – it is rather an institutional-level commitment that has the potential to encapsulate the truster's interests.

Political actors embedded in an institutional setup can make strategic use of this fact: "To earn the trust of the citizens, government actors place themselves in institutional arrangements that structure their incentives so as to make their best options those in which their individual benefits depend on the provision of the collective benefit" (Levi 1998, 87). A member of the public who seeks to evaluate the trustworthiness of a political actor will assess the extent to which he assumes his interests will be encapsulated by the trustee, similar to how Hardin's encapsulated

⁸ Levi argues, however, that these arrangements are seldom sufficient when it comes to evaluating trustworthiness, and that further institutional arrangements need to demonstrate a provision for sanctions (Levi 1998, 87).

interest model describes interpersonal trust relationships: Where respective knowledge about the institutional context and information about the direction and effectiveness of its constraining function are available, assumptions about the trustworthiness of the involved political actors become possible. Where the political actor is embedded within democratic institutions that deliver benefits aligned with one's preferences, this actor is trustworthy on the basis that he will be reasonably inclined to encapsulate one's interests. The ability for institutional actors to communicate this alignment of preferences thus becomes crucial in this encapsulated interest focussed view of trust taken in this study.

It is clear that institutional trust once established can be a powerful tool to manage social complexity for citizens in their political decision-making. Original growth of institutional trustworthiness where none was before though is more complicated, and hinges in large part on evaluations of its associated political actors. Key is here the accumulated political knowledge citizens collect over time (Fuchs, Gabriel, and Völkl 2002): Where over a longer period of time experiences made with political actors (and the outcomes of these actions) are similar, these can be abstracted from individual actors (and cease to be what Easton terms specific support) and are instead generalised to the regime level. This diffuse aspect of public support based on generalised cumulative experiences then becomes (institutional) trust. Similar to interpersonal trust relationships that go beyond information directly covered by experience, a measure of risk is introduced here (Luhmann 1989). Crucial here is though that the evaluation of trustworthiness is not merely tied to the next iteration of political leaders in the applicable category, but to the part of the regime or institution these are associated with. It is a confidence in the deterministic power of the institutional structure and its specific constraining function over authority-level actors that allows individual trusters to assess the regime-level in terms of its reliability to provide specific results. Detailed knowledge of institutional structures or their exact instruments by way of which they constrain authority-level actors is not

necessary for members of the public: As Fuchs et al. put it, a 'rough idea' that these structures exist and act in their constraining function is sufficient (Fuchs, Gabriel, and Völkl 2002). This is crucial especially when it comes to the evaluation of institutional trust relationships within a EU-context, where detailed information on institutional processes is not always salient in public debates. Institutional trust established in this way is an important tool to manage resources: it becomes less urgent to check individual actors in terms of their trustworthiness, and the pressure to acquire information in order to make respective evaluations lessens. Trust in the functional constraints exerted by the regime-level – extrapolated from generalised experiences – already determine the rough shape of expectations towards even lesser known political authorities.

Conceiving of an encapsulated interest-based view of institutional trust as described above is congruent with Easton's definition of diffuse support (Easton 1975, 1979). This de facto buffer can provide a measure of independence from negative experiences with specific political authorities, even in the face of actions that without this safety net of institutional trust would be suited to foster distrust in that actor. Even when day-to-day outputs fall short of citizens' expectations, either through socialisation, personal experiences or both they are assured that these output failures are indeed only temporary and will not present major impediments to the regime's ability to deliver desired goods. Framed in this way, it is first accumulation and then generalisation of context-specific instrumental support as necessary precursor for institutional trust to function as a robust buffer as described above (Thomassen and Kolk 2009, 334). Accordingly, temporary poor performances of a given group of political leaders do not jeopardise the continuity of an established democracy. Only where a regime's output cannot (temporarily) be balanced off against inputs of demands, people tap into this reservoir of favourable attitudes which helps citizens to accept outcomes that might not be congruent with their desired goods (Easton 1965).

For Easton, trust in institutions – as a crucial component of diffuse support – is indispensable for the long-term stability of democratic states (Easton 1975, 1979). In some form or another, the importance of trust in institutions specifically and public support in general for the long-term existence and effective operation of democratic governments has firmly been established (Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson 1995; Giddens 1990; Luhmann 1979; Rose 1994; Seligman 1997). Where doubts have been voiced (cf. Hardin 2002, 2006), instead of questioning the importance of public attachments to regime and community in general the point of contention is rather the extent to which it is institutional trust specifically that is a requirement for democratic societies. Indispensable is public support where it lends legitimacy to a given system – this is often conflated and used congruously with notions of institutional trust. Given the salience of literature on public support and legitimacy in a European Union context the next part attempts to untangle these two concepts.

3.2.3 Vertical thin trust and political legitimacy

Some conceptualisations of political trust imply the necessity of legitimacy as a precondition for trust – only if, on some level or another, the general public accepts the political institutions in question as legitimate can we expect citizens to trust these institutions as well. However, while these concepts are indubitably intimately tied together, it is maintained here that they are separate even if not fully independent.

As Newton carefully puts it, “institutional confidence is aligned with the concept of legitimation” (Newton 2008, 243). Trust in individual political leaders or even a specific government is commonly accepted to be somewhat fleeting – as governments are replaced or new party leaders succeed old ones, so can assessments of trustworthiness of political authorities change in a relatively short time span. On the other hand, trust in institutions is less prone to sudden changes –

and the stability that comes with positive public assessments of its institutions is an important cornerstone of democratic systems. Conversely, where the public distrusts not merely current political office holders but also the political office itself – its political institutions – systemic fundamentals are questioned. Hence, vertical trust relationships have been identified as important contributing factors to the legitimacy of governance (Gamson 1968; Miller and Listhaug 1990).

However, vertical thin trust is necessary for the long-term stability and development of democratic systems not merely on its own, but as an indicator for and a component of diffuse support (Easton 1975, 1979; Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson 1995). As per Easton's distinction, objects of this diffuse support can be both political authorities and political regimes, with the former marked by higher exclusivity than the latter (Easton 1979, 171f; Gamson 1968, 49). According to Easton, on both of these dimensions of trust and legitimacy, authorities as well as regimes can be evaluated positively or negatively. Easton's work remains key to understanding diffuse support and institutional trust, and a strong body of work can be found presenting modifications and further developments of his framework (cf. Dalton 2004; Fuchs and Klingemann 2002; Gamson 1968; Westle 1989). Following Gamson (1968) as well as Fuchs, Gabriel and Völkl (2002) who extend Easton's suggested analytical levels, in this study regime is understood to be defined primarily by its structure (and thus authority rules), which are in turn defined by respective values (culture). The regime is deemed to be the selective implementation of fundamental democratic values through norms, while these norms establish normative expectations for respective authorities.⁹

Legitimacy then is concerned with the relation between culture and regime: a regime is seen as legitimate by its citizens to the extent that it is congruent with their

⁹ "Das Regime stellt nach diesem Modell eine selektive Implementation der grundlegenden Werte durch Rechtsnormen dar und diese Rechtsnormen bilden wiederum normative Erwartungen an das Handeln der Akteure" (Fuchs, Gabriel, and Völkl 2002, 431).

values – it has to be committed to these values and perceived to be institutionalising them. This is by no means an absolute process – in theory different publics when faced with the same regime would come to different conclusions as to its legitimacy because these evaluations could be based on different normative foundations (Hardin 2007, 236).¹⁰ Where values deemed important by its citizens are improperly implemented on the structural level or overshadowed by other norms, this failure of commitment would normally lead to a regime being perceived as illegitimate. Instead of a lack of value congruence, failure of cognition can lead to a similar public perception where values are implemented but not recognisably so for the public (Fuchs, Gabriel, and Völkl 2002; Fuchs and Klingemann 2002; Kaina 2009).

The other component of diffuse support, (political) trust, on the other hand depends on the relation of regime and actors. To reiterate the concept presented in the previous part of this study, a regime creates expectations for decision-makers' actions by measure of its constraints. Citizens trust in this function on the basis of political experiences – crucially though not experiences based on individual politicians alone, but cumulative experiences that allow for generalisation beyond the individual actor to the regime itself. Outputs are in turn not merely associated with the individual actors, but – to an extent – with the regime itself.

While conceptually not the same, it is clear how closely linked these two aspects of political support are: Perceptions of legitimacy create the potential for trust in institutions and associated individual actors, as these form the basis in turn to formulate expectations vis-à-vis institutions and measure them against respective outputs (Kaina 2009). However, there is no clear conceptual direction where perceptions of legitimacy invariably lead to institutional trust: value congruence cannot simply be declared by observing institutions because what is observable

¹⁰ Hardin thus identifies one of the conceptual problems of legitimacy that it is a "system-level concept [depending on] individual-level assessments" (Hardin 2007, 237).

about the structural level from a citizen's perspective are mostly actions – the process level – and associated outputs. To the extent that implemented norms and values are manifest in these actions, evaluation of these in turn contributes to perceptions of legitimacy. Furthermore, not only is it difficult to define a given populace's values and norms conclusively to start with, the process of implementation of these norms on the structure level will not be a binary but instead a fluent one, open to different interpretations and – as Hardin reminds us – open to constant redefinition through external stimuli such as political crises (Hardin 2007). Accordingly, as both a potential source for and a potential outcome from perceived legitimacy, it is in turn not always possible to conclusively define where perceptions of legitimacy end and trust in institutions begins.

The conceptual ambiguities that come with the term legitimacy as well as the interdependence of institutional trust and legitimacy notwithstanding, it is important to be clear that trust in institutions and regarding an institutional framework as legitimate are separable. Within reasonable limits it is possible to assume institutional trust without explicitly elaborating on the perceptions of legitimacy. In terms of operationalisation, focussing on the extent to which citizen's expectations will be met based on encapsulated interests by political actors is possible without explicitly elaborating on potential normative congruence issues that may affect this relationship.

To untangle this complex relationship though, further clarification is necessary. As the next chapter will seek to present, there are more issues of conceptual interdependence to consider when it comes to (institutional) trust.

3.2.4 Interdependence of vertical and horizontal thin trust

As seen above, understanding institutional trust is important because as a key component of diffuse support it can have substantial impact on the stability and development of democratic systems. Trust in institutions, however, can also have societal impact outside of the regime and its immediately associated actors. Society – and specifically how citizens interact with each other – is not independent from its institutions, and accordingly understanding institutional trust can be important to qualify interpersonal trust relationships.

Institutional design specifically can be a key driver of generalised or social trust: For instance, Levi argues that it is not sufficient for legitimate regimes to reliably deliver outputs – effective governments must also be capable to effectively sanction rule-breakers. In turn, where (democratic) institutions are set up to effectively penalise the abuse of trust, people are more likely to trust strangers (Hooghe and Stolle 2003; Levi 1998; Rothstein and Stolle 2008). This has been confirmed to an extent in empirical studies, although correlations between citizens' trust in institutions and peoples' trust in strangers are generally weak and the direction of causality remains unclear (Freitag and Bühlmann 2005, 2009; Rothstein 2000; Zmerli and Newton 2008).¹¹ The fact that design and actions of government institutions affect levels of general trust, including both through basic exposures to democratic governments in general as well as experience of specific (social) policies is established in public opinion research (Inglehart 1997; Uslaner 2003).

A state thus ostensibly capable of monitoring laws and their transgression, committed to sanction rule breakers and able to provide information about its agents will appear competent so as to increase social trust (Levi 1998, 85). The threat of sanctions, once credibly established, can be envisioned as guaranteeing a protected

¹¹ Uslaner (2003, 175) points out that an increasing fear of being penalised by effective institutions for the abuse of trust does not automatically lead citizens to become more trusting.

space in which cooperative actions can thrive (Kaina 2009). Taking institutional trust as an indicator for sound institutional design, this top-down process of trust creation is also theorised to foster cooperation between strangers and thus to strengthen thin trust between citizens.¹² Contributions on the origins and development of social capital in particular (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000) have embraced the idea that trustworthy institutions create interpersonal trust – and in turn enable a more efficient, interconnected civil society through an increased production of social capital (Rothstein 2000; Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

Apart from the power of credible threats of sanctions, there is also a normative level to this top-down argument of trust creation: Presupposing a normative component in deciding the state of diffuse support as discussed in the chapter above, interacting with the same political institution essentially serves as a visible proxy for shared values between citizens: If someone regards an institution as trustworthy based, in part, on what this institution represents and how effectively it translates this into action, then by extension a fellow citizen who comes to the same conclusion must share similar values. Even in the absence of further information about other citizens, shared institutional trust becomes the foundation for social trust (Fuchs, Gabriel, and Völkl 2002; Offe 1999; Warren 1999b). Because they place the same kind of trust in the same institutions and thus arguably value the same norms as the truster, the “implied normative meaning” of institutions (Offe 1999, 70) serves as common ground for further cooperative interaction. In other words, it is the moral plausibility of societal institutions that is the source for justified normative demands on how citizens – including political leaders and other elites – act.¹³

¹² Albeit not all cooperative actions are taken on the basis of trust relations (cf. Williams 1988).

¹³ According to Fuchs et al., from this elaboration on Easton’s model it follows that it is legitimacy – and not trust – that is the only relevant and sensible category when applied to how publics relate to institutions (Fuchs, Gabriel, and Völkl 2002, 433).

In light of this a hybrid conceptualisation is proposed that captures both the normative appeal as well as the interest-driven thrust that trustworthy institutions can exert. Ideally, a given administration will not merely need to demonstrate adherence to values through honesty and competence in its actions, but also that its associated actors gain benefits – reputational or otherwise – from competence and honesty, and are actively incentivised to act accordingly. Acting in congruence with these norms then becomes the ‘right thing’ to do both from a moral as well as from a utilitarian perspective. The predisposition to view government agents as trustworthy will increase, and if tangible benefits are the demonstrable outcome cooperation of the regulated will increase as well. Citizens trusting in the competence of a given state to perform is here not only a criterion of good governance that need be met from a normative perspective, but furthermore practically contributes to the functioning of society by facilitating cooperative ventures between its citizens through higher levels of interpersonal trust (Levi 1998, 84–87). This potential derived from high-trust constellations is particularly relevant when examining the case of the European Union, where contributions to a collective sense of community can be particularly impactful (Kaina 2009, 182).

It is certainly true that there is a “complex cause-and-effect interdependency between trust and politics” (Newton 2008, 262). With regard to the potential effect of trustworthy institutions on cooperative interactions between citizens, it is clear why research interest into different conceptualisations of trust has been consistently high. Even though this top-down approach of generating generalised trust – and more – through the proxy of trustworthy institutions is an exciting avenue for research particularly within the context of European integration studies, within the scope of this work this potential knock-on effect of institutional trust cannot receive further attention. Instead, having presented arguments of how trust in institutions can be generated and why this form of trust can easily impact on other areas of life in

democratic societies, some further clarification on the problems of the term particularly in the context of the European Union have to be taken into consideration.

3.2.5 Conceptual Problems of Institutional Trust

The concept of institutional trust is not uncontroversial, and some of the concerns raised warrant being addressed here. In contrast to the normative argument that aspires to increasing institutional trust in democratic societies, the desirability of high levels of public trust in general can also be questioned to begin with. After all, blind trust leading to “trusting the malevolent or the radically incompetent can be foolish and often even grossly harmful” (Hardin 2006, 67). However, the assumption still holds that where people trust in actors that are not trustworthy, the resulting lack of success or breakdown of the relationship is not due to failure of the concept of trust itself. Instead, engaging in such an interaction with an untrustworthy actor – be it an individual or an organisation – is by definition not a trust interaction. The burden for citizens to accurately identify trustees in vertical interactions with political institutions in comparison with horizontal interactions with their fellow compatriots may well be higher. This does not invalidate the importance of institutional trust, but it is among the conceptual issues that need to be considered here.

There is a need for conceptual precision where institutional trust is part of social science research. The term ‘trusting in government’ can certainly run danger of taking on vernacular connotations of trust where the concept can be exhaustively defined as an expectation or prediction. To be clear, this is not congruent with how the concept is used in this study. As seen above, predictions based on trust depend

on the extent to which the trustee takes the truster's interests into account.¹⁴ Attaching the label of trust to merely correct expectations of favourable outcomes robs the term to a significant part of its meaning. Recognising this relational aspect of trust though is more challenging for cases of institutional trust in comparison with individual-level trust interactions. Personal valuations like in a personal romantic relationship, or moral commitments to family members etc. are not applicable when it comes to describing how institutions relate to individual citizens. While in an interpersonal trust relationship it is possible to predict where one might want to embrace another actor's interests in order to maintain that trust relationship for future mutually beneficial cooperative exchanges, when it comes to institutional trust this becomes an epistemological problem: "Few of us can know many government officials and their commitments well enough to judge whether they actually value their relationships with us." (Hardin 2006, 68). The fact that we are generally unable to acquire personal knowledge of the interests and motivations that drive officials that are public figureheads for institutions makes it, according to Hardin, practically impossible to fulfil the requirements of a trust relationship. The mere expectation of institutions to act opportunistically – e.g. to acquire votes or funding, i.e. to serve their own self-interests – may well accurately predict institutional behaviour, but is on its own insufficient ground for evaluations of trustworthiness. Both for institutional trust as well as interpersonal trust interactions it is important for the truster to successfully separate the opportunistic from the truly dedicated – scope alone makes these types of evaluations harder for the case of trust in institutions though. Where an interpersonal relationship supplies a degree of intimacy through which knowledge of a partner is accumulated to then serve as the potential foundation of trust, governments and other organisations are more difficult to interact with and thus relate to by nature of their abstraction alone. Cooperative ventures between individuals and

¹⁴ Hardin (2006) likens this to 'trust that the sun will rise' or 'trust that oncoming traffic stays in their lane' – both are (usually) accurate predictions, but there is either no active agency involved from the trustee, or agency but without consideration of the truster's interests.

organisations are marked by less direct reciprocity compared to interpersonal trust relationships, and the reason why the term 'confidence' is sometimes preferred to accurately describe these relationships.¹⁵ Note that it is held here that while scope certainly changes the complexity of evaluating institutional trustworthiness, this does not make these evaluations impossible. Where accurately predicting the trustees opportunistic interests is key for trust relationships, the predictability of comparatively inert institutions is not a priori a disadvantage.

Another key issue when comparing different types of trust interaction is the power asymmetry generally normal between truster and trustee in institutional trust relationships. Cook, Hardin and Levi (2005) note that substantial power differences between actors are further obstacles to the formation of such relationships, and make it more difficult to meaningfully predict encapsulated interests. A powerful actor can expect certain actions or benefits from a less powerful interactant independent on whether or not this actor is trusted – simply because of the power difference and presumably the threat of coercion. For the same reason a less powerful actor in this constellation has less grounds to assume that the more powerful actor would encapsulate the potential truster's interests in their own. Because of this asymmetry, forms of institutional trust are always high-risk trust relationships. Political organisations rarely have an incentive to be trustworthy towards a specific individual, but rather towards a larger audience and therefore are less likely to adapt to individually specialised demands and interests. This does not preclude the existence of institutional trust in the political arena on a general basis. However, the hurdles for the successful formation of institutional trust are certainly high and place additional burdens on citizens to not trust blindly. What this means for the case of institutional

¹⁵ (cf. Hardin 2006, 65). Note however that as with other definitions of trust and related concepts, there is ambiguity here as well; for Seligmann (1997, 2012) for instance the crucial definition between trust and confidence is for the truster to either be (confidence) or not be (trust) in control. When it comes to the lack of reciprocity in institutional trust scenarios, even less control and even higher risks for the truster means that ie. Seligman's notion of confidence does not apply here.

trust within a European Union context and the extent to which trust in EU institutions can be assumed will be covered in the following parts.

3.2.6 Trust Facilitation and Institutional Trust in the EU

For the case of the EU, theorisations of vertical trust are key to examine how the wider public relates to the EU and how this reflects on the integration project as a whole. Explicit measures of institutional trust are of key importance in quantifying public support for the EU, with public trust in EU institutions and public trust in their ability to produce certain outcomes important cornerstones of popular support for the EU in general. Key consideration here is the extent to which the wider public embraces the belief that the political system will produce a preferred outcome (Klingemann and Fuchs 1995; Mishler and Rose 2001). Popular approval of EU policies and actions is thus seen as a precondition to its stability (Loveless and Rohrschneider 2011; Rohrschneider 2002).

Neither identification as European nor implicit attachment to the EU are regarded here as necessary preconditions for vertical trust in EU institutions to flourish. Trust in institutions, including in EU institutions, can potentially be established in a multiplicity of contexts through a variety of actions, even if these links cannot always be examined with conventional measurements of trust in attitudinal surveys only (Kaina 2009). When it comes to evaluating whether or not the EU is a trustworthy institution for a given member of the public, the respective salience of EU actions becomes important: Knowledge of the institutional procedures that constrain the EU not to act against the goal of delivering public benefits is key – or better even, knowledge of procedures that can effectively and credibly signal that the EU will act towards the benefit of its citizens. Because of the resource intensiveness of making such trust evaluations, especially where the salience of individual political actors is

low, the EU is at a structural disadvantage compared to national level institutional actors. Members of the public must be able to identify EU actions at least to an extent that allows for attribution to a diffuse EU umbrella actor, if not individual EU-level actors specifically – something that is increasingly hard to realise in the face of growing social and political complexity (Hobolt and Tilley 2013, 2014). Instruments like e.g. the Spitzenkandidaten electoral process are important attempts to raise the profile of individual political leaders, who, if effective, could contribute to transforming positive trust evaluations of individual EU leadership actors into perceptions of the institutional actors on the EU level as trustworthy. In general though, the reputation of the EU as an institutional construct far removed from the political realities in conjunction with low salience of concrete policies makes it hard for members of the public to reliably estimate the extent to which public interests are not only encapsulated on the EU level, but actually delivered on.

One specific dimension of the EU's reputation that has long been a staple of public EU perception and that can be employed for the purpose of investigating trust is the pervasive stereotype of the EU as a regulatory – at times even over-regulatory – actor. Even though knowledge of specific policy backgrounds may in many cases not be directly available to members of the public being faced with manifest examples of EU regulatory involvement, the consequences and presence of symbolic signifiers of EU action can contribute to the formation of institutional trust. As people experience the consequences of these regulatory actions in their daily lives, trust in the EU need not come via a pervasive media discourse that sways public opinion towards the positive. Instead, daily incremental experiences of EU actions serving the individual's interests – i.e. by the presence of consumer protection regulation – can contribute here. With increased frequency of exposure to banal stimuli of regulatory activity these are also increasingly normalised in public perception – with the potential to lend credibility and even increase trust within these specialised contexts.

In effect, customary association of the EU with regulatory measures, expected to guarantee a degree of product or service standards to its citizens, may generate its own 'learned habit of integration' as people increasingly, even if not consciously, rely on these markers in their daily lives. As an actor visibly involved in this regulatory process, its controlling intervention – the proverbial stamp of approval – may lend credibility to information. Here, the EU is not necessarily perceived as an actor consciously associated with specific product safety standards or with consumer protection, but as a more diffusely trusted actor whose regulatory involvement is increasingly normalised and daily present and thus becomes expected.

This suggests that a meaningful contribution towards understanding implicit attachment to the EU can potentially be made by looking at to what extent exposure to EU symbols changes peoples' views of the EU as a trustworthy actor. Where implicit attachment to the EU exists, it is possible that people will respond differently after being exposed to EU symbols, for instance when evaluating the credibility of information. This inverts the relationship for the purposes of empirical investigation, effectively employing perceived trustworthiness as proxy for the measurement of implicit attachment. Based on this linked relationship between implicit attachment and trust, where in a prepared experimental context increased levels of trust can be shown to be connected to the exposure to EU symbols, conversely the existence of implicit attachment to the EU can be inferred. This is the core assumption behind a series of experimental interventions at the heart of this study, which warrants further examination of questions of methodology and implementation in the following chapter.

4. Using Fridges to Measure EU Attitudes: Experimental Design and Implementation

This study employed an experimental approach to explore the relationship between the implicit exposure of participants to banal visual triggers and the meaning people associate with the European Union. Specifically, this project employed exposure to well-known functional cues associated with the EU to acquire empirical data on the extent to which the EU symbol enhances perceptions of trust.

The goal of the experimental interventions discussed below was to employ the EU energy label as a marker of the EU's banal presence as a regulating actor within a theoretical purchasing scenario. With the presence of cues like these increasingly accepted as a normal part of everyday life, it is assumed that the act of placing trust in product standard labels that are endorsed by the EU equally becomes a normal part of consumer scenarios. The EU energy label then presents a visual cue that lends itself particularly well to experimental manipulation.

Key to this study is that the EU-related nature of these experiments is not previously advertised to participants, and that other EU-related priming during the invitation and first part of the experiment is avoided. This series of experiments builds on the fact that the implicit perception of the EU as a trustworthy regulating actor will be present in an experimental environment, but is equally conscious of participants' explicit attitudes towards the EU. The aspect of implicit trust as a hitherto under-researched dimension of public evaluation of the EU is at the heart of this study, while at the same time avoiding the priming of explicit evaluations was a key concern when designing these experiments.

This chapter discusses the methodological background as well as the ethical implications of this experimental design, before exploring the implementation and

operationalisation of the concepts of trust and implicit attachment in these interventions. An abridged version of this chapter has previously been published as Heinrich (2016).¹⁶

4.1 Flagging the People: The Methodological Background of Flag Stimuli as Research Approach

A key innovation in this project is the use of an experimental approach together with the comparative and interdisciplinary nature of the study. This investigation into the meaning and effect of EU trust is methodologically informed by novel political science contributions showing the strengths of experimental methods, specifically by adopting methods from the field of social cognition to the study of public attachment to the EU (Cram and Patrikios 2015; Cram, Patrikios, and Mitchell 2011). These studies show how the relationship between implicit attachment and trust in the EU can be meaningfully explored by employing stimuli-based experimental designs common in other fields of study.

In political science, different experimental research designs have increasingly been embraced in part to address some of the methodological weaknesses discussed in earlier chapters. Most notable here are contributions by Bruter, who elaborates in great detail on the effect of the combined exposure of participants to EU-related symbols and media reports (Bruter 2003, 2009). Taking up the notion of identity as ‘imprisoned by language’, he emphasises the necessity of introducing additional experimental methods into the EU identities research ‘toolkit’. Assuming all expressions of (EU) identity to be highly context-dependent, he provided an

¹⁶ A draft version of this chapter was presented at the Young Scholars School ‘European Identity’ Jena and subsequently published as (Heinrich 2016). With explicit thanks to participants for their extensive comments, and to Ireneusz P. Karolewski, Viktoria Kaina and Sebastian Kuhn for their work as editors.

important contribution moving beyond measures of identity relying solely on self-reported identification with the EU. In his experiments participants were presented as stimuli a fictitious newspaper extract or a newsletter, containing a combination of articles reporting on the EU either in favourable or less favourable manner, and photographs with either EU-related symbols or placebo images.

Bruter notes that flag, anthem and other symbolic cues were selected to convey values and meanings that EU institutions expected to best represent those positive values and meanings associated with the 'idea of Europe', often in the explicit attempt to stimulate a mass European identity (Bruter 2009). Without passing judgement on the success of associating this 'heroic' narrative as a conscious focal point of EU identification in the public mind, increased exposure of the wider public to these EU symbols in a variety of contexts is assumed here. In Bruter's studies then participants are divided into four groups, with all of the groups receiving a different combination of symbolic/placebo visual stimuli and positive/negative textual stimuli. Both studies allowed for comparisons across national samples, with three (Bruter 2003) and six (Bruter 2009) different countries covered.

Further experimental research into links between exposure to visual primes and EU identity was presented by Cram and Patrikios (2015), successfully introducing interdisciplinary methods to the field of EU identity study by employing a series of primes in an experimental context. Political psychology and social cognition research has made ample use of designs employing visual or textual primes in the past, where by means of a prepared sensory input perception and thought processes of subjects are meant to be influenced through the activation of specific knowledge (Augusto 2010; Naccache 2009). As a tool primes have found application where researchers are trying to distinguish psychological processes that can proceed unconsciously, and are thus not always available for measurement via self-reported items. Where subconscious perception of the stimuli is a necessity, specific masking

techniques are available to control for prime detection by subjects (Kunde, Kiesel, and Hoffmann 2005). While a straightforward binary distinction between subliminal and supraliminal primes is not always possible, it is generally held that prime visibility and length of exposure are positively correlated with stronger priming effects, while a short exposure or short delay between stimulus and mask conversely shortens the time where a prime can have an impact on subjects' perception (Francken, Gaal, and de Lange 2011; Lau and Passingham 2006). One of the most accessible introductions that highlights the power even of low-visibility visual cues and emphasises the effectiveness even where subjects believe not to be affected is presented by Kahnemann (2011).

Implicit measures employing primes have found ample application in social cognition research, i.e. by examining stereotyping (Fazio and Olson 2003), political identity activation (Morris, Carranza, and Fox 2008), or multicultural learning and cross-cultural experiences (Maddux 2011; Maddux, Adam, and Galinsky 2010). Examining reaction to US climate change policy decisions in an experimental context, textual primes have been shown to reliably prime favourable evaluations of the US depending on whether or not these decisions were associated with former presidents Obama or Bush. The author here also notes a strong interaction effect with measurements of participants' political awareness (Dragojlovic 2011). Even minor variations in textual prime design have been shown to have a demonstrable effect on participants' reactions, i.e. when showing that text cues can be used to increase people's negative emotional responses to events depending on how social expectancies were primed (Brock et al. 2012).

Cram and Patrikios are key here to demonstrate how these findings can be adapted to the study of EU attachment (Cram and Patrikios 2015). Their approach extends political psychology research specifically designed to investigate the effects of low- and unconscious exposure to national flags (Carter, Ferguson, and Hassin

2011; Hassin et al. 2007). These experimental interventions employ national flags to examine the effect of subliminal exposure on participants' attitudes, intentions and decisions. Hassin et al. initially demonstrated a marked impact on measures of identification with Israeli nationalism after participants were primed with the Israeli flag (Hassin et al. 2007), confirming his hypothesis that even subtle national symbol cues can influence political thought and behaviour. This relationship holds true for participants' reactions to additional Italian, Russian, and US stimuli in a second series of experiments conducted in the appropriate national contexts, additionally showing effects that the authors identified as "flag-induced prejudice" against minorities (Hassin et al. 2009, 144). Exploring this relationship further within the US context, the authors then showed how exposure to the US flag could potentially affect reported voting behaviour of subjects, with flag exposure linked to an increased Republican vote-share even in a sample of non-Republican voters (Carter, Ferguson, and Hassin 2011). Where the symbolic power of the employed stimuli is salient enough, this effect of flag priming is not restricted exclusively to current national flags: Studies employing the US-confederate flag as treatment in an experimental setup designed to record potential voting behaviour drew connections between exposure to this stimulus and lower disposition to support minority politicians (Ehrlinger et al. 2011).

Cram and Patrikios successfully demonstrate the applicability of these findings to the context of EU attachment (Cram and Patrikios 2015; Cram, Patrikios, and Mitchell 2011; Patrikios and Cram 2016): They present an online experiment with participants who self-identified as British, English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. These respondents were exposed to an implicit visual cue related to the EU (neutral for the control group) and afterwards answered a series of survey questions, including both on instrumental and affective connotations of EU membership and standard survey measures of attachment to the EU. Crucial here is that the authors specifically aim to test for banal, low-level engagement with the EU, differentiating between symbolic visual cues (photograph of flag on a public building) and functional visual cues

(photograph of the EU symbol at passport control), where the first set of cues is associated with a 'heroic' as opposed to the latter 'banal' representation of the EU. This distinction is a key innovation, allowing for adaptation of flag-priming experimental designs to non-national contexts where salient, cohesive, explicit attachment to a (political) actor cannot a priori be assumed. Where political psychology allows tapping into national narratives by using symbolic priming designs exclusively, this cannot directly be translated to the European Union context where no such straightforward established identification exists. To this purpose, we review the concept of banal Europeanism and discuss the necessary adjustments to the experimental design as suggested by Cram.

4.2 On 'Banal Europeanism'

At the national level, Billig (1995) has argued that deep-seated national identities are more pervasive than the occasional passionate display of nationalist fervour might suggest. He argues that the low-level banal reminders of national attachment encountered by citizens in their daily lives play a crucial role in underpinning national identities which might be mobilised in changing contexts. Crucially, the author emphasises the importance of routine and dispassionate forms of nationalism. For Billig, observers ignore this banal nationalism at their peril. Billig's seminal contribution helped to renew interest in the importance of implicit, everyday stimuli tapping into nationalist attachments, with mundane aspects of everyday life such as street names (Azaryahu and Kook 2002), television coverage of sports and weather (Mihelj et al. 2008; Phillips 2012), and automobile licence plates (Leib 2011) reviewed through the lens of banal nationalism.

In the EU context, no deep-seated EU identity comparable with national identity exists. However, Cram (Cram 2001, 2009a, 2011) has suggested that focussing on the low-level, banal reminders of EU membership, to which EU citizens are exposed on a daily basis, brings a new perspective to the study of EU identity: Building on contributions by Deutsch (1966), Haas (1958), and Gellner (1997), Cram suggests that theories of nationalism and national identities can meaningfully enrich our understanding of EU identities (Cram 2001, 235). Crucially, political identities are not treated as necessary preconditions for the emergence of political regimes (Cram 2011, 2). For the case of EU identity, conceptualised after Laitin (1998) as 'identity in formation', a closer look at the emergence and dissemination of 'learned habits of integration' is warranted. Applied to the case of the EU, this line of research has been growing under the label of banal Europeanism. Here, rather than triggering a pre-existing attachment to the EU, Cram suggests that daily exposure to banal reminders of belonging may in fact play a role in creating a deeper-seated EU identity over time. Analogous to the methodologically diverse research on banal nationalism, the empirical verification of instances of banal Europeanism can potentially be realised beyond the analysis of printed mass media (Trenz 2006).

While passionate displays of attachment that are commonly entailed in notions of explicit identification with a polity are largely absent in the case of the EU, a growing implicit attachment to the EU relevant in everyday interactions is theorised as an important building block of identification. This emerging implicit, even unconscious identification with the European Union, or 'banal Europeanism', may be more pervasive than measures of self-identification in cross-sectional surveys can capture. It is thus assumed that a careful review of unwaved (EU) flags help us understand "(...) the depths and mechanisms of our identity" (Billig 1995, 175). Where self-allocated labels are at the heart of investigations into attachment to the EU, it is not necessarily possible to qualify the perceived importance of these labels for the subjects in question. The extent to which one supports EU integration or the

likelihood of naming oneself European are not necessarily congruent with implicit attachment or identification with the EU: Just as it is possible to refuse identifying as European while still supporting the EU, one can reject the European label while still having implicit attachment to the EU (Cram 2011). With manifest examples of the EU membership in everyday life being increasingly normalised, this low-level engagement cements the meaning and utility of the EU within the 'home space' without necessarily being a conscious process.

In line with the concept of 'banal Europeanism' the experiment exclusively tests the impact of functional stimuli in the context described below. Building on this, the methodological approach proposed here seeks to avoid explicit references to the EU: However, going further than the contributions of Bruter, these references are not merely omitted from the initial contact. Instead, no explicit mention of the EU is made throughout the study. Thus, any potential skewing through self-selected participants who might otherwise specifically target or avoid experiments with an obvious focus on the EU can be avoided. More importantly, this offers a way to specifically approach the issue of implicit trust in the EU while avoiding explicit EU-related survey questions which might themselves trigger conscious responses to the EU. The goal is to create an experimental situation where participants do not consciously consider their EU identity or their degree of support for the EU. All differences in effect between treatment and control condition can accordingly be assumed – supposing other confounding variables are adequately controlled for – to be due to the exposure to the functional EU-related visual stimulus.

However, designing the experimental interventions with these theoretical considerations in mind, further ethical questions are raised that warrant clarification before concrete design choices can be discussed.

4.3 The Ethics of Experimentation: Focussing on Implicit EU Evaluations

The experimental interventions discussed below were presented as a 'political science study' concerned with the energy efficiency of white goods appliances and customer responses in such a survey. No other goal or more detailed explanation of the study's methodology was specified at first contact with participants.

Earlier designs of these experiments aimed at completely masking the interventions as market research surveys, further detracting subjects' prospective attention from any EU symbols encountered during participation by employing explicit participant deception. The original intent here was to build on the employed measurements adapted from current market research surveys in order to explicitly disguise the experiment as a study exclusively concerned with investigating energy efficiency of specific products. This was to further avoid tapping into explicit evaluations of participants on the EU or EU-related issues, and to further strengthen the case of a non-biased sample by eliminating a self-selection effect that would potentially attract participants with extreme explicit attitudes towards the EU.

However, the experimental interventions reported on here did not employ any techniques to explicitly mask or misrepresent the study's intention. The final research design was developed to clearly avoid any kind of active deception of participants about the interest at the heart of this research. This is based on key concerns regarding participant deception and concealment of information when designing experiments, and the responsibility of academics vis-à-vis their participating subjects in specific, and the theorised wider pool of potential participants for future studies in general.

Although political science experimentation, including this present study, borrow heavily from the fields of (political) psychology, on the question of participant deception this study recognises behavioural economists' concerns in particular vis-à-vis deception by commission (Dickson 2011): Participants being able to rely on experimenters and their instructions to not be explicitly deceiving is of paramount importance to guarantee long-term experimental control. A reputation of honesty and transparency in this view does not merely benefit the individual experimenter and the study at hand, but also contributes to the viability of experimentation as a reliable method of attaining valid results beyond a single experiment, laboratory, or even field of research (Bonetti 1998; Hey 1993, 1998; Ledyard 1995; Morton 2010). In this view, avoiding to actively mislead participants prevents tainting the pool of subjects for further research and is thus a core concern for the design of experimental interventions.

Based on the above and contrary to earlier plans, for this study the experimental interventions were not masked as 'market research', and no explicit deception was employed neither when inviting participants nor during the introduction to or execution of the experiment. In addition, a final debriefing section was a crucial part of the experimental design, explaining in detail the academic purpose of the research, highlighting the effect of the EU symbol on perceptions of trust as the object of the study and highlighting the display of the visual cue as the independent variable. This included a brief remark on the specific interest in implicit trust to the EU as key variable, and the resulting need to avoid priming explicit identification in the design of the survey. It needs no further elaboration that furthermore all subjects were explicitly briefed on their rights as participants before the start of the experiment, including the right to terminate their participation in the experiment at any point without any negative repercussions. Participants had the option to include final remarks and opinions on the study at the end of the experiment, and furthermore several modes of contact to the responsible researcher as well as the supervising

academic were offered. However, during the course of all three of the experiments discussed below no negative comments as to the potential deception of subjects were received. With the design of this experiment taking care to adapt to the challenges named above, this study was granted level 2 ethics approval by the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh in 2013.

The experimental interventions were implemented accordingly with respect to these ethical considerations. Employing the EU energy label as a visual stimulus, the key concerns this study was designed around are presented below.

4.4 Setting up the Experiment: Guiding Research Questions

As a scenario that is plausible, mundane as well as close to the personal experience of participants, the experiments focussed on a fictitious purchasing scenario. All participants were exposed to the same product photographs of a specific fridge model, both with and without the EU energy label as part of the image. For a subset of participants these images contained the original design of the EU energy label including the well-known EU flag design; for subjects in the control condition this particular symbol was omitted from the energy label stimulus.

For these experimental interventions, the guiding research questions that were attempted to be answered were formulated as follows:

a) To what extent is implicit exposure to the EU flag positively correlated with the perceived quality of the product in question?; and

b) To what extent is this exposure correlated with the perceived reliability of the relayed product information?

The experiments in question here were set out to investigate two different aspects that were both thought to be potentially associated with participants' implicit trust in the European Union. Through an experimental act of conveying controlled visual information, meaningful – even if small – differences in participant perception were predicted to be effected by whether or not these sets of visual information were presented with or without an implicit trigger signifying a connection with the European Union.

Presenting a certain type of product visually in conjunction with regulatory information obviously endorsed by the EU, or as the function of regulatory activity of the EU, was here at first expected to be correlated with a more positive perception of a given product's quality. Given an implied knowledge on part of the subjects of the EU's regulatory activity, a product visually recognisable as being conformant to EU regulation was here expected to be implicitly held in (slightly) higher regard in comparison to a product that although visually the same could not readily be associated with a comparable guarantor of regulatory standards.

In a similar vein, the positive perception of displayed information on these products was expected to be (slightly) positively correlated with the visual association with the EU's regulatory oversight. This expected positive perception is here defined as a slight increase in the perceived reliability of information. As an indicator of trust in the regulatory activity of the EU, information visually associated with certain products was thus expected to be perceived differently by participants depending on whether or not a clear visual association with the EU was part of the presentation or not.

The general reasoning here is in parallel to consumer decisions that might be observed in natural, everyday life purchasing scenarios: Here the perceived credibility of marketing or product information can be increased by visual cues of an endorsing – presumably objective or trustworthy – institution. Similarly, for these experimental purchasing scenarios participants were expected to draw on prior

knowledge of the EU's regulatory activities – even if said knowledge was only implicitly triggered. This activation of knowledge during the experiments was expected to affect how product information was perceived in terms of veracity, and to potentially alleviate doubts as to factual accuracy of the displayed product information. Accordingly, where the EU is expected to guarantee certain product standards, it would conversely also be less likely for consumers to fall victim to false claims of product manufacturers – for the cases at least, as hypothesised, where a visual marker serves as a functional reminder of the EU's activities.

Conversely, the second of these research questions was concerned with evaluating to what extent subjects would perceive the reliability of certain controlled sets of information differently depending on whether or not an implicit functional visual EU cue was included in the experimental intervention or not.

The experimental interventions in this study were designed according to the research questions set out above. The following paragraphs will first give a brief overview of the design of the visual cues employed herein, before elaborating in more detail on the type of survey items corresponding to the research question a) on measures of perceived product quality, and on survey items corresponding to the research question b) on trust and perceived reliability of information. These sections correspond to the first and second part respectively of the surveys used in the experimental interventions. A following chapter then offers additional information on the concluding third part of the survey experiment, covering aspects of demographics and the design of the debriefing section. Moving on to concrete aspects of implementation of these designs, the last part of this chapter features an overview of how the data analysed in this thesis was gathered.

4.5 Visual Stimulus Design

The study relies on exposing participants to a series of visual stimuli throughout the experiment, with the design of these stimuli varying in small aspects between control and treatment groups. Key difference between these groups is the visible EU flag, included as a pictogram only in the visual stimuli that subjects in the treatment group were exposed to. To further illustrate the design choices described in this chapter, Appendices A and B1-B2 have been included.

In designing the visual cues for this experiment the EU flag was chosen as a symbol recognisably representing the EU not only in official contexts, but also increasingly present in banal, everyday situations. With the European flag now found on Euro notes, passports and driving licences, an increasing number of everyday items that bear these visual links to the EU have found their way into people's lives. Research looking into the effects of exposure to these EU related symbols has documented variations in effects between national samples (Bruter 2009; Cram and Patrikios 2015). Anticipating these variations and therefore designing the experiment with the potential for comparability between cross-national samples in mind, it is imperative to use a symbol that can be reasonably assumed to receive similar levels of exposure across samples. This should not only be true for the symbolic element of the stimulus – in this case the EU flag, where similar levels of recognisability can be assumed in the context of samples from different EU member state publics. Furthermore though, the entire functional stimulus should offer a similar level of salience in public life.

However, note that while for this project the visual cue employed was recognisable beyond individual national samples, and thus potentially suitable for further comparison of results between participants from different nationalities, this was not a primary concerns for the design of these experimental interventions.

Furthermore, specificity of the cue was important, thus allowing the testing of the potential effect of a single type of functional cue present in everyday life in all member states of the EU. With the harmonisation of these visual cues still on-going (driving licences)¹⁷, optional in parts of the EU (e.g. car licence plates), or unlikely to be realised in the near future for the entire EU (bank notes), there are, however, only a limited set of salient comparable functional cues to choose from. With passports and EU-related symbols displayed at airports discussed by Cram and Patrikios (Cram and Patrikios 2015), a further field where people in the EU regularly are faced with the EU's impact is where its role as an actor involved in product and service regulation is concerned. More specifically, EU-level actors have been involved in the establishment and harmonisation of an EU-wide energy consumption scheme that applies to consumer products almost all EU citizens will be familiar with, such as kitchen appliances, light bulbs and in varied form even to cars and televisions.

It is now mandatory for manufacturers of major kitchen appliances ('white goods')¹⁸ to ensure that the EU energy label is clearly displayed at the point of sale and in marketing material. Since Directive 2010/30/EU a uniform label using pictograms is used in all 27 EU member states, used for all white goods sold in the EU and replacing the older but not dissimilar EU energy label (Directive 92/75/EC). Consumers have thus been exposed to these labels in everyday consumer tasks for a considerable time; furthermore, with the reformed label being uniform in all member states comparability between different national samples can be expected. As a scenario that is plausible, mundane as well as close to situations known from personal experience, for this study the purchase of a fridge-freezer combination was chosen.

¹⁷ While driving licence designs are now fully harmonised in the EU with Directive 2006/126/EEC, this form of documentation is only obligatory since January 2013 with non-harmonised licences still valid until 2033.

¹⁸ Here: Refrigerator, freezer/ fridge-freezer, washing machine, tumble dryer or dish washer.

For the experimental interventions discussed here both the original energy efficiency label design was used, as well as a modified version adapted to the needs of the experimental design: the original energy label (A2)¹⁹ includes the EU flag in the top left corner and was employed as visual stimulus for the treatment condition; the modified version includes no political marker of any kind, with the EU flag replaced by a blue background border already part of the original label. This adaptation of the original label (A1) was employed in the control condition. Any brand and model information on the labels was removed for both the treatment as well as the control stimulus in order to avoid introducing any further confounding variables. Apart from the displayed EU flag both labels are exactly the same; an energy efficiency rating of A++ and performance information in form of pictograms and associated measurements corresponding to average values associated with modern fridge-freezer products completes the conveyed emulation of a label one might encounter in stores today.

The visual stimuli participants are exposed to during the experiments are not restricted to the display of the treatment or control energy label only. To visually convey the focus of the experiment, after the participant briefing and one expository paragraph participants are exposed to two full-screen product pictures of a modern fridge model. The first one shows the fridge in an opened state with example food products visible as well as a small EU energy label attached to the inside of the upper door, while the second picture shows the same fridge in a closed state and without any visible label.²⁰ The pictures are taken from current marketing material for Siemens fridges, but all identifying brand and model information were removed by the researcher in the composition of the final stimuli employed in the experiment in order to marginalise any potential effect of this confounding variable. In both the treatment

¹⁹ Both labels are included in Appendix A.

²⁰ Cf. Appendix B1/B2: Q59/Q60 (control), Q9/15 (treatment)

and control group the same original image of the same fridge model was used as basis for the final stimuli.

While the full product shots of the fridges include a small version of the EU energy label, with the EU flag only included for the treatment condition, a full-screen version of the label is separately displayed to participants as the next part of the experiment. The first sets of questions participants are asked deal with the perception of the fridge (see below); this assures that participants are exposed to the EU energy label and, due to the size of the stimulus, can clearly see the EU flag without further visual distractions. To make sure subjects do not proceed too quickly through this part of the study and thus potentially avoid exposure to the EU energy label, participants are only able to proceed with the study after waiting for three seconds at this stage of the experiment. Theoretical minimum exposure time to the designed stimulus is thus at three seconds, with the 'proceed' button located in the immediate vicinity of the flag included in the label.

After displaying stand-alone photos of the product as well as a full-screen version of the label without any other objects on screen, the first and second set of questions participants answer are accompanied by a third visual cue, combined from the previously visible images: Displayed in the upper half of the screen, participants are exposed to the top part of the EU energy label (including the EU flag for the treatment condition) on the left and a resized version of the open fridge image on the right.²¹ While participants select the first set of 10 Likert-scale ratings, this visual stimulus – including the EU flag – remain on-screen, and the same stimulus in the same composition is also displayed on the following page with the next set of Likert-scale items. At this stage only the top part of the EU energy label is displayed, omitting product information pictograms and associated print to avoid introducing

²¹ Cf. Appendix B1, B2: Q57/58 (control), Q59/Q60 (control), Q103/105 (treatment), Q111/Q113 (treatment). Note that not all participants are exposed to all of these stimuli.

further visual distractions. As such, while participants answer these questions the EU flag (for the treatment condition) remains on-screen as key visual information.

After being exposed to these consumer product and EU energy label pictures as described above, no further visual cues are included in the first part of the experiment, primarily concerned with perceptions of product quality. For the second part of the experiment, focussing on perceptions of reliability of product information, only the full-screen image of the EU energy label is displayed again. This cue is exactly the same as used in prior parts of the experiment.²² The label is repeated once between the first and second set of questions, displayed as Q64/Q66 (control) or Q32/Q35 (treatment) respectively.²³ No visual cues are employed after this stage of the experiment.

In total, a subject of the treatment group completing the entire experiment will be exposed to the EU flag at five key stages during this intervention: Once to introduce the label following product shots, twice in conjunction with question sets from the first stage of the questionnaire, and twice before question sets from the second stage of the questionnaire. Reiterating the exposure in this manner primarily serves the purpose of providing implicit visual reminders of these cues. As the participants cannot be prevented from taking short breaks or spending varying amounts of time on screens without any visual cues, the effect of these variations can be mitigated by assuring comparable exposure scenarios for all subjects independent of behaviour during the experiment. More importantly, with the expected small effect size of this type of implicit exposure it is important to repeat these visual cues in measured intervals in order to increase the likelihood of participants recalling the display of the flag in the treatment condition. With e.g. more than 40 different Likert-scale measurements included as part of the experiment questionnaire, any measurable effect of exposure to the EU energy label could reasonably be expected

²² Cf. Appendix A.

²³ Cf. Appendix B1, B2.

to be far smaller if said exposure was restricted to only displaying the visual cues once at the start of the experiment.

As to the measurements itself, the following paragraphs will present in greater detail the type of questions included in the experiments, starting with the first part of questions on perceived product quality, the second part with indicators of perceived reliability of product information, and an overview of the subsequent debriefing section.

4.6 Measuring Participants' Perceptions of Product Quality

The first set of indicators attempts to establish participants' perception of product quality and performance, adapted from Spangenberg, Voss and Crowley (1997), and is modelled after current product satisfaction research. Using these measurements this first part of the experimental interventions attempts to establish to what extent participants associate positive evaluations with the fridge model presented as part of the visual stimulus.

The first two questions allow subjects to grade the presented fridge in terms of how positive or negative they perceive its image across 2x10 dimensions.²⁴ Using 7-point Likert items, participants are asked to express their opinion of the displayed fridge's quality across these dimensions. Each of these Likert items solicits participant evaluation of the fridge on a bipolar scale, employing a semantic differential scale based on the techniques proposed by Osgood et al. (1957). In this case, negative or unfavourable evaluations are coded as low values and positive or favourable evaluations are coded as high values. Example dimensions presented to

²⁴ Cf. Appendix B1.: "Please give your overall feelings or impressions toward using this model of fridge." (Q22/Q82/Q104/Q112) and "How would you judge what the product does for you?" (Q23/Q83/Q106/Q114)

participants for evaluation are how unpleasant/pleasant, unsafe/safe, useless/useful or harmful/beneficial they perceive the product to be.²⁵ Using 7-point Likert items to measure agreement with one of the semantic poles here makes 'neutral' midpoints available to participants. All 20 of the included dimensions are assumed to be potentially relevant components of perceived product quality, with the question designed to capture a wide spectrum of positive (or respectively associated negative) perceptions of the displayed fridge. This is based on the assumption that among different participants – i.e. hypothetical customers – the set of features relevant for the evaluation of the kitchen appliances might vary considerably. In theory, some participants might well focus on aspects of distinctive design or an outer appearance of the product otherwise defined as attractive, while others will prefer to express positive evaluations in terms of how beneficial or problem solving they perceive the fridge to be. These set of questions are thus deliberately designed to capture a breadth of nuances in terms of evaluations, without specifically being interested in a single subset of these. Instead, the goal here is to allow for the creation of an additive measurement scale for perceived product quality from these items in the final analysis. No a-priori preference for any single item in terms of its relative contribution to this umbrella measurement is assumed at this stage. Within these two questions, the Likert items are randomised for each participant.

Further included in this first part of the experiment are a set of four questions specifically elaborating on the perceived monetary valuation of the presented fridge, and its projected relevance for a positive purchasing decision. Two questions solicit the perceived monetary value of the fridge, allowing participants to report both the amount they would be willing to pay as well as the retail price they would expect for this particular model in their local currency.²⁶ When it comes to the evaluation of

²⁵ For the full range of Likert items included, please refer to Appendix B1.: (Q22/Q82/Q104/Q112) and (Q23/Q83/Q106/Q114).

²⁶ Cf. Appendix B1.: "What is the most you would be willing to pay for the model in the image?" (Q28; Q85; Q108; Q116), "What would you expect the retail price for this model to be?" (Q29; Q86;

products, recognition of any kind of positive aspects of a given product is here assumed to be positively correlated with a given monetary valuation: Where participants feel a given product is of better quality, it is expected that the average disposition to also attach a higher economic value to this product can be recorded. While this type of measurement is highly susceptible to the differing individual economic circumstances of participants, allowing for potentially high variation in the data, of interest here are only if average attached monetary value (as a function of perceived quality) will be higher for treated subjects than for participants in the control condition.

Similarly, two further measurements on the general perception of the product design as well as on the likelihood of making a purchase decision in favour of the presented model are included. Both are expected to correlate with earlier measures of perceived product quality, assuming that a product perceived as suitable would also be one prospective consumers are likely to purchase.

The issue of perceived quality of the fridge model included in the visual stimuli in this experiment is approached from a variety of different angles, attempting to capture the key dimensions across which prospective consumers attach value to or establish quality of a given product. This is done in order to establish a robust measurement of perceived product quality for later analysis, where the focus is less on establishing which aspects of these perceptions are dominating in the sample, but rather on allowing for insights into variation of evaluations between control and treatment groups. Recognising the inherent shortcomings in the attempt of establishing this measure based on participants' reactions to visual stimuli in an online environment alone, this analytical focus on any differences between subjects exposed to the EU flag and their non-exposed counterparts was also a guiding

Q109; Q117). Based on the IP address of participants in this online-based experiment, for these questions British Pounds (GBP) were used for subjects accessing the experiment from the UK, and Euros (EUR) for those accessing the survey from any other location.

constant for the design of the second part of the experimental interventions as described below.

4.7 Placing Trust in Labels: Measuring Credibility of Information

The second set of questions deals with participants' perceptions specifically of the EU energy label, assessing to what extent the information presented in this context is trusted to be reliable and accurate. By contrasting the control condition with the treated stimuli that include EU symbols, measurements in this part of the experiment aim to clarify to what extent involvement and (indirect) oversight by EU institutions contributes to this assessment of reliability.

Similarly to the first part, this section of the experimental interventions starts off with a 2x5 series of Likert items. These are included to allow for later creation of an additive scale measuring overall perceived trustworthiness of information.²⁷ Following conventional designs of Likert-scale measures, participants are asked to express their agreement or disagreement with ten different statements on a 5-point Likert scale. The first five statements here are designed to assess how subjects perceive the label and the conveyed information in terms of accuracy of information; they record participants' assessments of the likelihood of possible distortion of the veracity of information in the context of marketing, and the perceived usefulness of the label for a purchasing decision. In an important shift, the focus of these measurements is specifically on the label itself rather than on the entire product presentation as in the prior part.

²⁷ Cf. Appendix B1.: "Based on the above information, would you agree or disagree with the following statements:" (Q65/Q13), "The manufacturer is required by law to display the product label you saw on the previous page. Knowing that, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?" (Q67/Q36)

The second set of Likert items focusses on the regulatory background of the energy label, and participants' opinions on public institutions intervening in markets via regulatory frameworks. Quality, efficacy and desirability of these interventions are key dimensions that are targeted in this part of the study: Accordingly, participants are asked how they feel about manufacturers being obligated to publish comparable product information in the form of the energy efficiency label, if they would wish for more involvement of public institutions in consumer protection activities in general and if they feel these institutions are doing a good job ensuring the accuracy of data released by manufacturers as a result of the specific regulatory intervention in form of the energy label here.

These measures are designed to record e.g. the extent to which participants overall are worried about potentially detrimental results of such regulatory activities, such as rising prices or low-quality, i.e. inaccurate or confusing consumer-facing information, and as such in general the extent to which they have negative feelings about public institutions being involved in devising and enforcing the use of the energy efficiency label employed in this experiment. However, of key interest here is primarily whether or not any negative perceptions of public institutions' regulatory activities will be lower for subjects in the treatment group, compared to their counterparts in the control condition. Although the treatment effect is estimated to be small, implicit trust in the EU could lead users to voice less opposition or scepticism towards regulation after being exposed to the EU-flag, even if the measurements do not focus on EU regulation explicitly. Even without explicit mention of the involvement of any EU institutions specifically, implicit reliance on or normalisation of an umbrella presence of the EU in relation to consumer protection on the internal market is expected to have some form of measurable impact on the extent to which institutional intervention in the form presented here is expected, and maybe even desired.

It should be noted though that an effect in the opposing direction is equally imaginable, where the treated part of the participant pool would act upon prior and potentially salient notions of the EU as over-regulating behemoth marred by bureaucratic inefficiencies, and would thus articulate more negative attitudes towards regulatory activities than their counterparts from the control condition. However, at this point no explicit mention of the EU or any of its institutions is made in the study, with all questions inquiring into perceptions of unspecified public institutions to avoid specifically tapping into explicit EU discourses.

This object of the study is only revealed during the following final stage of the survey experiment; this combination of a set of demographic measurement questions in a first and a second – separated – set of debriefing questions is presented in the next paragraphs.

4.8 Evaluating Participants: Demographics & Debriefing

The third and final section of the questionnaire used in this study contains a set of variegated demographic measurements that allow for better assessment of the target samples. These include measurements tailored to this study, e.g. how environmentally conscious participants see themselves to be, as well as more generic questions used to record age, gender, nationality and country of residence of subjects. These demographic indicators are then followed by a crucial concluding debriefing section.

At the beginning of this section participants record their attitudes towards selected aspects of environmental protection by supplying answers to a set of questions aimed at building a scale of environmental consciousness. Subjects are asked to answer five measures presented as randomised 5-point Likert scale items,

enquiring as to their agreement to five different statements.²⁸ The included statements cover egocentric (e.g. statement 2 and 4 in regards to personal purchasing decisions) as well as sociotropic dimensions (e.g. statement 3 on responsibilities vis-à-vis future generations). Low values here are interpreted as a low valuation of environmental issues, while high values are coded to correlate with a high self-professed environmental consciousness of participants; the exception here being statement 5, which is inversely coded to increase reliability of the scale.

Although this study is not concerned *prima facie* with subjects' identification as environmentally conscious (or the lack thereof), an indicator that allows for quantification of such attitudes offers benefits when it comes to the contextualisation of the core effect analysed in this study. Any measurable effect of experimental exposure in this study – be it in terms of an increase in perceived product quality or in perceived reliability of information – should be interpreted in further analysis while controlling for environmental consciousness of participants: Any such experimental effect might be more prominent with participants expressing high concern for environmental issues simply because any kind of state-sanctioned manifestation of regulation might seem desirable to this demographic. On the other hand, it is unclear to what extent the response to the main effect will be different for the subsample of participants with low environmental consciousness; as such, this set of indicators will add a further dimension for contextualisation to the main point of analysis in this study.

The next measurement included records if participants have purchased any major household appliances within the past year, or if not if they had at least considered making such a purchase. This allows for simple quantification of the part of the sample who have recently bought (or shopped for but decided against buying) a fridge, and have thus been exposed to the labels that make up the stimulus used in

²⁸ Cf. Appendix B1: Q39

this study. Again, this allows for contextualisation of the main effect analysed in this study; any demonstrable effect might be stronger for people who have recently seen the stimulus in natura – and the prospective absence of any effect might in turn be related to cases where people have not been exposed to the label in natura.

The above are followed by measurements of participants' core demographic variables: As such, information on age, gender, country of residence and nationality was recorded.²⁹ As a measurement of participants' age an item adapted from US Census surveys, expressed as an ordinal variable, was modified to suit the expected young student sample. Country of residence was added in combination with nationality to establish an indicator of the extent of participants' familiarity with the energy efficiency label. It is hypothesised that the effect explored here is only ever demonstrable if people are familiar with the label and are customarily exposed to it in banal, everyday situations. Conversely, where people are living in an environment where they have never been exposed to the EU label before the experiment, it is unlikely that the inclusion of the EU flag in particular would have any effect dissimilar to the effect of exposure to visual cues associated with state-mandated regulatory activity in general. As only a measurement of participants' nationality was employed in prior iterations of this study, the 'main country of residence' variable was added here to provide for a better suited indicator for hypothesised normalisation of public displays of the EU flag.

The following block of questions consists of measurements on participants' media consumption habits, measurements of participant's political attitudes, and – perhaps most importantly – of participants' general perception of the EU.

²⁹ Cf. Appendix B1: Q62, Q46, Q55, Q64

First, the reported frequency of subjects' news consumption via different media is recorded using a measurement adapted from the European Values Study:³⁰ In terms of scale both in regional as well in terms of longitudinal dimension the EVS series is a well-established staple of social science public attitude surveys, with a particular focus on developing measures apt for use in cross-country samples. The measurement used in this study was adapted from a question included in the Politics and Society section of the EVS 2008 wave as Q81/v281, a measurement directly comparable with EVS data from previous waves.³¹ EVS results as well as employed measurements have been widely cited, including on issues of media and news consumption habits. In order to ascertain the extent to which any potential exposure effect might be dependent on media consumption habits, an established measurement from the EVS series was accordingly introduced into the study design discussed here. For the purpose of these experimental interventions the wording and coding of the original question was directly adopted, allowing for participants to report their political news consumption habit in five mutually exclusive categories of decreasing frequency. Ranging from every day (1) to never (5), with the lowest value thus corresponding to the highest frequency as in the original EVS design, the only addition here was a final explicit 'don't know' (6) option.

Next, in order to record participants' general political attitudes without any direct reference to the EU, the researcher referred to a measurement established in the British Social Attitudes Survey:³² Sourced from the BSAS 2012 Self-Completion Questionnaire, this measurement is designed to capture political attitudes on an additively constructed left-right scale. In use in BSA studies unchanged since 1986,

³⁰ Cf. European Values Study, EVS 2008 Master Questionnaire p.21 Q81, and EVS, GESIS (2016): EVS 2008 Method Report. GESIS Papers 2016|18. Retrieved from <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>.

³¹ Cf. variables v263 in the EVS 1999 wave and e150 in the EVS Longitudinal Data Files 1981-2008, retrieved from <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>.

³² Cf. British Social Attitudes 30, 2013, Self-Completion Questionnaire A, p.128, Q48. Available at http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38460/bsa30_technical_details_final.pdf and http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38738/bsa_30_annotated_questionnaire_2012.pdf

this is one of the most widely accepted measurements in use to map out latent political attitudes along a left-right split of the political spectrum. Recognising that within the context of EU public attitudes this measurement may not necessarily be the only relevant variable to describe the latent political attitudes of a given sample, as a firm staple of social science research this measurement was still included in order to allow for the sample to be analysed according to core social science standards. This BSA measurement was included in the study here accordingly, using the same wording and five point Likert design. This experiment assigns the value of one to the responses most associated with the political right ('Strongly Disagree'), the value of three to a neither agree nor disagree option, and a value of five to the attitudes associated with the political left ('Strongly Agree'). Note that in this study all individual items are coded in the same direction, with the assigned left-right values inversed from their original use in the BSA studies. Furthermore, in order to reduce the length of the total experimental intervention, the indicator Q48 e) that appears in the original BSA design was removed from earlier drafts of this experimental design, with the remaining four variables deemed sufficient to compute a final left-right scale for the purpose of this study.

Up to this part in the experimental intervention all explicit mention of the European Union or even European Union identity is avoided. The only exception here is indeed found in this final demographics section, where two items explicitly assess participants' support for and attachment to the EU. Established measurements are employed here; adapted from the Eurobarometer surveys two measures are used to establish a comparable estimate of respondents' explicit evaluations of the EU. To gauge this dimension of public support, the perceived benefit from EU membership as well as an indicator to quantify the EU's overall image is used,³³ with both indicators commonly found as dependent variables in research on public support for

³³ "Generally speaking, would you say that the UK benefits or does not benefit from being in the European Union?" "In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?"

the EU (Anderson 1998; Gabel 1998c; Hooghe and Marks 2005; McLaren 2002). Employing these measures is set to achieve two things: For one, this allows for comparability with other research relying on these explicit measures of support for the EU. More importantly, any effect ascribed to the exposure to the functional stimuli can better be evaluated when examining its manifest strength in correlation with participants' explicit attachment.

Any effect present, defined as the measured difference between participants in the control and participants in the treatment group, can furthermore be examined for the potential of effect size being correlated with explicit evaluation and perception of the EU: Participants who exhibit high explicit support might reasonably be assumed to also be more trusting of information presented in conjunction with EU symbols, or as the result of EU regulating activities. Conversely, a demonstrable positive effect of exposure to non-conscious stimuli for subjects with low levels of explicit support for the EU – the 'Eurosceptic' subgroup of the sample – would lend most credence to this research approach. These two indicators of explicit EU support are thus lending a crucial dimension to the investigation of this hypothesised effect here – to what extent is its size congruent with – or even contingent on – pre-existing explicit levels of support.

These two measures of EU support are embedded within this demographics section, accompanied by the other demographic measures described here and displayed fully randomised within a set of four (together with media consumption and political attitude scale measures). Embedding them within a diverse set of indicators avoids drawing explicit attention to the EU focus of the study before the debriefing of participants; as one among several socio-economic indicators it is the design intention here to avoid eliciting extreme positions on levels of EU support. This is in line with other attempts in earlier parts of the study to avoid triggering participants' explicit evaluations of or attachments to the EU.

The following part is the concluding section of this questionnaire, containing two filter questions as well as the participant debriefing. This debriefing section explicitly highlights public perception of the EU as the object of the study, and the display of the visual cues as the independent variable. It clarifies the research goal behind the experimental intervention as well as briefly elaborates on basic procedures used, such as splitting participants into control and treatment conditions and employing different visual cues depending on these conditions.³⁴ This is a key step to ensure compliance with basic requirements of research ethics, as participants have to be made aware of even minor instances of deception by omission before the conclusion of the experiment.

Furthermore, this final part of the questionnaire is notable as participants are asked to report whether or not they were aware of the display of political symbols during the experiment. This helps to assess to what extent perception of the EU flag in the treatment condition was indeed non-conscious. However, this check is included primarily in order to be able to evaluate the quality of the experimental design – and not to lend validity to participants' replies: Whether or not the EU focus of the experiment was consciously noted by participants remains secondary, as none of the survey items – except for in the final part of the demographics section as described above – invites evaluation of the EU or its institutions itself.

4.9 Implementation and Samples

The above questionnaire design was implemented as an online experiment in a total of five iterations, with the first two piloting this experiment only with colleagues and within the personal environment of the researcher to improve the design of the

³⁴ Cf. Appendix B1, Q48.

experiment itself. Following this phase this experiment was implemented with three different samples which will be discussed below: First, an iteration relying on online-recruiting of young participants predominantly from EU countries, without further sampling restrictions. Second, a larger sample exclusively made up of university students in the UK, and third, an intervention with German citizens more heterogeneous in terms of age.

In these three cases participants were invited to take part in a ‘political science study’ using the survey platform Qualtrics.³⁵ All potential subjects were presented with a link to participate in the online experiment, with the link also conveying basic information about the recruitment of the participant. All individual-level information was anonymised and at no point during the analysis could individual cases be related to personally identifiable information of individual participants.

4.9.1 Study I: Online Recruiting via ‘Social Media’ Websites

The first data set reported here is different from the subsequent two in that sampling was less targeted and more open to non-European participants. As a first iteration of this experiment no financial incentive was offered to participants, with subjects merely asked to help with a 15 minute postgraduate research study.

With the study available only in English, social networking websites were used to invite young adults that showed a clear regional affiliation. As theorised above, the main effects potentially observable in this experiment are likely dependent on familiarity with EU symbols in everyday contexts. Accordingly, sample specificity

³⁵ Qualtrics software, Copyright © 2016 Qualtrics. Qualtrics and all other Qualtrics product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of Qualtrics, Provo, UT, USA. <https://www.qualtrics.com>

was a core concern for participant recruitment here while at the same time being one of the key challenges for internet-based recruitment.

Without the financial resources to attract a large number of participants or the required access to pre-screen potential subjects invitation messages for this study were posted to specific subsets of on-going social media discourses that offered a clear regional attachment as per the requirements of this study. Two key demographic features were defined as desired for the recruitment process for this data set: For one, subjects should be living in (or be closely attached to) Scotland or the wider UK in general, or at the minimum be fluent English-speakers living in another EU member state. While participants were asked to state their nationality as part of the demographics section of the experiment, invitation messages predominantly targeted users that could reasonably be assumed to fall under the desired nationality criteria ex-ante. Secondly, the sample consisted of homogeneous but not primarily university affiliated participants. Homogeneity is deemed useful here given the fact that the researched main effects are estimated to be of smaller size: aiming to reduce the impact of confounding variables is here deemed beneficial especially considering the small number of participants across all three studies discussed here. While no claims can be made as to the generalizability of this sample or the results gained from these experiments to the overall population of the UK (or other EU member states), not relying exclusively on student data in all of the experimental iterations was seen desirable at this stage of the design of the study.

To target a homogeneous group of potential participants with explicit ties to the UK or the EU despite limited resources, specific subsets of social media websites were selected. For this iteration of the experiment invitation messages were posted to the website reddit.com, where users maintain active communities specifically on Scotland, the United Kingdom and the European Union. While this website overall is host to a rather diverse set of different online communities, the segmentation into

different sub-communities allows for a comparatively high specificity in terms of the potential audience. A concern here is that the user base is smaller – especially when targeting smaller sub-communities exclusively – in comparison to more commonly known social media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook. Apart from specificity, a reason to base participant invitations on this smaller platform is one of visibility: most social media platforms – often referred to as ‘social network’ websites – make information visible to its users based on interlinked connections with other users. The more users a single content contributor is connected to, the bigger in turn the respective audience for this particular user’s public messages. As such, a link disseminated on Twitter by a popular public figure or included in a post on Facebook by a larger institution might in short time accrue a high number of visits – a viable approach to quickly distribute links to survey-based research. The drawback here is that lack of access to these ‘gatekeeper’ users, who can quickly multiply the visibility of messages on social media platforms, can often prevent messages from reaching relevant thresholds. Considering the customarily low response rates in online-based survey research this negates some of the appeal of the direct access to potential participants that the internet offers.

Some of the above concerns are less pertinent to the case here: Dissemination of invitation messages via the above named subcommunities *r/unitedkingdom*, *r/scotland* and *r/europe* on the platform *reddit.com* are less susceptible to issues of visibility. Even novice users without an established network can in theory attain the same visibility here with their messages as more seasoned users of the service. With the invitation messages competing for space mostly with headlines from relevant (i.e. Scottish or British) news outlets, invitation items were strategically placed during periods with lower density of news items. After prior communication with the moderators of these communities, two invitation messages each were posted to these websites, spaced three days apart and with one of these messages placed on a weekend day, thus guaranteeing higher visibility. At this point

in time the communities had an estimated number of 78,000, 12,000, and 55,000 subscribers for the communities with UK, Scotland and Europe focus respectively. These figures are, however, not congruent with the number of users that were de facto exposed to these messages: The maximum number of potential visitors exposed to the invitation message could potentially be higher, as not all visitors need be subscribed to these communities. On the other hand, even on a weekend it is unlikely that all registered member were active on a single given day. Due to the nature of these communities in terms of fluidity and high frequency of new content, each invitation message was in a high visibility spot for an estimated minimum of two to three hours per community, with longer exposure for smaller communities. As it is not possible to exactly track the number of users who were exposed to these messages, no estimate can be given for how many users decided against participation in the experiment after being exposed to the invitation message.

Participants for this experimental intervention were invited during November and December 2013, with the online platform accepting participants over a duration of three weeks. The vast majority of subjects participated immediately (i.e. within the first 24 hours) after the placement of the invitation messages.

Apart from the mode of participant recruitment, the main difference between this first and the following two studies discussed here is that no financial incentive was offered to participants at this stage of the experiment. In part, this decision was taken in part due to the inability to a priori control for the location of the participants – within an online context of high anonymity a non-negligible part of participants were expected to participate with residence outside of (but otherwise high interest in) the European Union. Providing financial reimbursement for part of the participant pool outside the desired demographic requirements was here deemed outside the available resources for this study. Although this was expected to result in a lower number of participants, this effect was expected to be mitigated by the high absolute

number of potential subjects exposed to the study by means of the chosen medium. As seen below, this assumption was not necessarily correct. As a direct result, financial incentives were included in the two following studies.

4.9.2 Study II: UK student sample

The second instance of the online experiment discussed here was implemented in February/March 2014, focussing on a sample comprised of students from various UK universities. Predominantly, these included groups of undergraduate students from the University of Strathclyde, Newcastle University and Northumbria University, with additional smaller groups of students invited from the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow and the University of Dundee. Students were contacted via university email, presenting them with a brief message that outlined the study as a political science experiment at PhD level and solicited students' participation. No explicit mention of the European Union or specific details about the relevance of the included visual stimuli was offered in this initial contact; however, prospective participants were made aware of the fact that subjects would be exposed to different stimuli during the experiment as part of the initial briefing.

Overreliance on student samples alone has been identified as a problematic aspect of research in many disciplines employing survey and experimental methods (Rosenthal and Rosnow. 1969; Sears 1986). It is important to highlight that restrictive participant recruitment like this is expected to affect expected results and further negatively affect any potential aspirations as to the ex-post extrapolation of results to a more general population. Although from the outset it was not the goal of these studies to provide results generalizable to the general population in the UK or the EU, not the least due to the restrictions stemming from small-n experimental research in general, the decision to focus on a student sample here was furthermore not in

ignorance of these well-established critiques of student sample-based research. In similar vein to the sample presented above, the key concern in participant recruitment was to provide for a relatively homogeneous sample of participants predominantly living in the UK – or even if only recently moved to the UK, with a sizeable percentage of these participants familiar with life in a different EU member state. Where homogeneity not only in terms of nationality but in education, age and to an extent socio-economic background is often seen as a key detractor in the argument against overreliance on student samples, these expected similarities were judged to be advantageous for this early stage of pilot research: with the expected difference in effect size between participants in the control and treatment groups likely to be small, any potential reduction of confounding effects – i.e. by attempting to reduce sample heterogeneity by focussing on recruiting students – was seen as beneficial here.

With an emphasis on undergraduate and first stage students, invitation messages were sent out to an estimated 2000 students, the bulk of which consisted of students in politics and related social science disciplines at the University of Strathclyde and the University of Birmingham and politics as well as linguistics at Newcastle University and the Northumbria University. In a similar fashion the three smaller groups of students recruited on a per course basis at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee hailed from the political science disciplines as well. Due to the decentralised distribution of invitation messages – mostly by supportive senior researchers at the various institutions mentioned here – only one invitation message was sent out per user, which in part may account for the response rates: In total 181 subjects followed the invitation and participated in this tranche of the experiment, with 113 participants fully completing the entire experiment. For more details on the specific properties of this sample please see the analysis below.

Considering the challenges associated with online-based recruiting and implementation of survey experiments, a modest financial incentive was offered as part of the recruiting process. As not all subjects could be paid appropriately due to restricted financial resources on part of the researcher, all participants were offered the choice to voluntarily submit their email address after conclusion of the study: Among all participants who submitted their contact details, after conclusion of the experiment one GBP 50 voucher for the online store Amazon was given away.

4.9.3 Study III: mixed German sample

The third iteration of the experiment is again closely modelled after the second study, employing the same research design including stimuli as well as measurements. However, the key distinction for this last iteration was in the explicit attempt to secure a more variegated sample composition for analysis, specifically differing in terms of certain demographic factors.

To begin with, this third sample attempted to include participants from older demographics. This is important not only considering the general theoretical limitations stemming from an exclusive reliance on student samples, but furthermore due to the obvious biases introduced when testing experimental purchasing scenarios with a predominantly young, low-income sample. This third iteration thus attempts to remedy this by explicitly targeting non-students, allowing for more participants from more variegated economic backgrounds.

The second key distinction here is a shift in geographical focus: Where the second sample was almost exclusively focussed on UK participants, in contrast the third wave participants were exclusively recruited in Germany. For accessibility reasons, the questionnaire employed in the experiment was translated into German

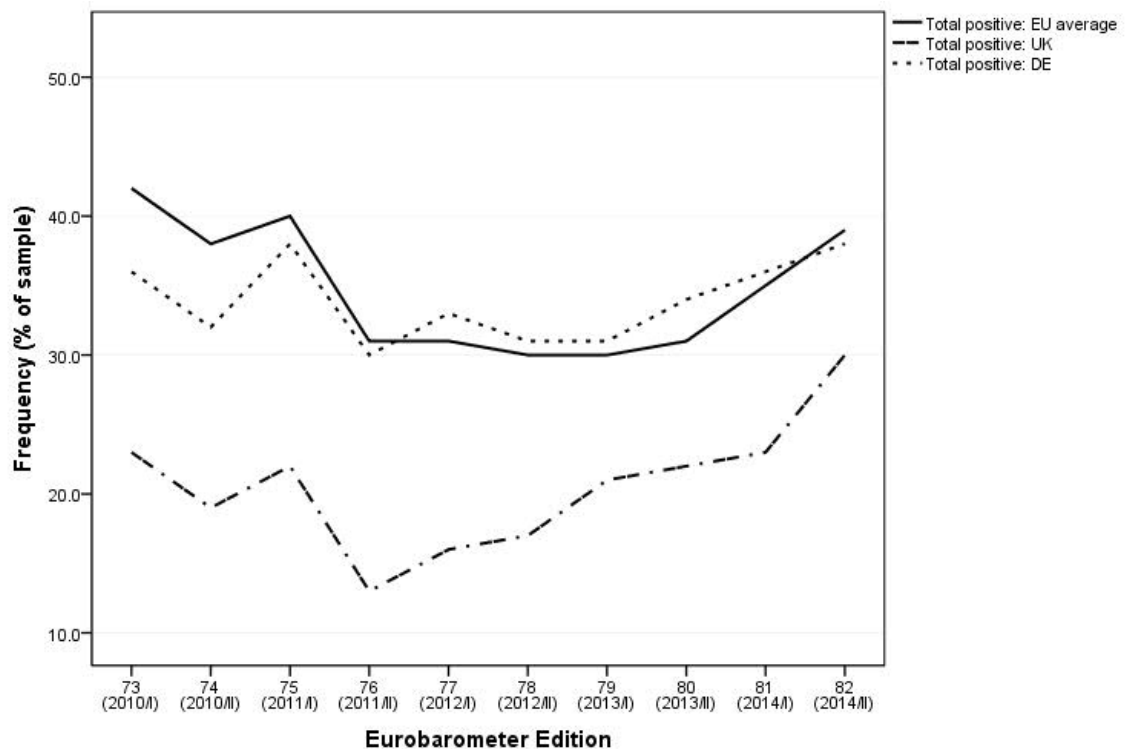
by the researcher.³⁶ While it is expected that this translation introduced a small additional confounding element when interpreting the results, with German as the native language of the researcher this risk was deemed acceptable when planning this intervention.

The main advantage of the wider geographical focus in the sampling process for this third iteration lies not only in conducting the experiment with a more heterogeneous sample in general, but furthermore aims to specifically offer more insights into the dimension of public perception of the EU: Often in the context of public trust in the EU, UK samples are associated with below-average results in comparison with comparable surveys in other European member states, whereas German samples in similar studies are often placed towards the higher end of public evaluations of EU institutions. While there are certainly good grounds to challenge the overgeneralisation of associating the UK populace with anti-EU attitudes only, as well as defining German citizens as only 'pro-European', comparable indicators as used in this study have found average attitudes towards the EU in the UK to be consistently and systematically lower than in Germany. Last but not least, this debate on fundamental differences between public attitudes in Germany and the UK has reached a new quality with the advent of 'Brexit'. Although this grave transformation of the status quo that had not yet become relevant at the time of the implementation of this study, it gives credence to the assumption that the two samples are likely to diverge meaningfully.

³⁶ Cf. Appendix B2. The researcher translated the questionnaire into his native language German on his own.

Figure 1

Positive EU image in the Eurobarometer Survey Series – Comparison UK and DE



Note. Percentage of respondents who answered the question “In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?” with either ‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ in general EB survey since 2010.

Even at the time though, the potential for observing differences in how the exposure effect might be expressed was recognised. Geographical focus of recruitment were areas around Dortmund and Hamburg; in order to be more responsive to the above-mentioned socio-economic dimension efforts were made to target a demographic of participants age 40 and above. Recruitment was realised through a series of activity based personal networks to what amounts to a convenience snowball sample. It is important to note that this introduces a significant amount of bias into the study: As with prior samples, self-selection effects, small total participant n, and most importantly the limitations in accessing a wider potential participant base are constraints to be mindful of. Biases thus introduced, while also

introducing bias towards higher sample homogeneity, will preclude the results from being generalised to a larger population. However, while not ideal, the sample composition in its form was judged sufficient for the purposes of further experimental interventions.

5. Data Analysis

For this experiment three distinct datasets were collected using the experimental design implemented as described above. This chapter will present these datasets, outline key features and discuss these in reference to the research hypotheses.³⁷

The discussion of these results in the following paragraphs is grouped by the guiding research questions on perceived product quality and information reliability and the respective sections of the experimental interventions presented above. Appropriate statistical approaches and detailed hypotheses are presented for each part of the experiment. The data presented is grouped accordingly by topical focus rather than originating sample, e.g. data on perceived product quality is discussed across all three samples first before presenting data for the second part of the experiments.

5.1 Descriptives: Sample Composition

The three samples used for analysis here are, as mentioned above, a sample gathered via the social media website 'Reddit', a larger sample consisting of UK university students, and a smaller sample of German adults. In total, the analysis here is based on 232 cases, with $n_{\text{treatment}} = 106$ and $n_{\text{control}} = 126$. This includes a total of 41 partial participant responses who supplied data to only parts of the questionnaire, a subject that is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

³⁷ Please note that an electronic version of the data set used in this chapter was submitted with this thesis. The data set can also be accessed at http://www.flagsandfridges.eu/data/Heinrich_Philipp_dataset_final.sav.

Table 1

Sample composition – completes vs partial completes * sample * treatment

	Sample I SM		Sample II UK		Sample III DE		Total	
	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C
Completed	22	25	53	60	12	19	87	104
Partial	10	11	7	11	2	0	19	22
Total	32	36	60	71	14	19	106	126

Table 2

Sample composition – EU vs non-EU participants * sample * treatment

	Sample I SM		Sample II UK		Sample III DE		Total	
	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C
Ingroup	21	23	53	61	12	19	86	103
Outgroup	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	4
NA	7	9	7	10	2	0	16	19
Total	32	36	60	71	14	19	106	126

Note. Partials include all participants who answered at least one set of questions without completing the full survey. Ingroup includes all participants living in an EU member state, while outgroup includes all participants confirmed as living in a non EU country. All participants who do not unambiguously fall into one category are recorded as partial completes.

For the first experimental intervention, this analysis can make use of 47 complete and 21 partial response sets. Out of these 68 cases 32 were randomly assigned to the treatment group and 36 were part of the control condition. Data from 47 participants was formally marked as fully completed, with random assignment of participants to the control and treatment condition resulting in $n_{\text{treatment}} = 22$ and $n_{\text{control}} = 25$.

The second experimental intervention discussed here was implemented using a sample of undergraduate and a smaller portion of postgraduate students in the UK. A total of 131 response sets form the basis for analysis ($n_{\text{treatment}} = 60$ and $n_{\text{control}} = 71$), with 113 of these recorded as fully completed.

The third sample consisting of German participants is both the smallest sample of the three, as well as the sample with the lowest non-response rates. With $n_{\text{treatment}} = 14$ and $n_{\text{control}} = 19$, only two of these cases contain partial non-responses.

Data for the gender distribution of subjects is almost exclusively available for participants who fully completed the experimental interventions, with the according measurement included as part of the third and final part of the questionnaire. In total, 97 participants identified as male and 95 participants identified as female. However, this even distribution in total is the additive result of a male majority in S_1 , and female majorities in S_2 and S_3 : Female and male participants are split across these samples 11:36 (S_1), 65:50 (S_2) and 20:11 (S_3).

Table 3

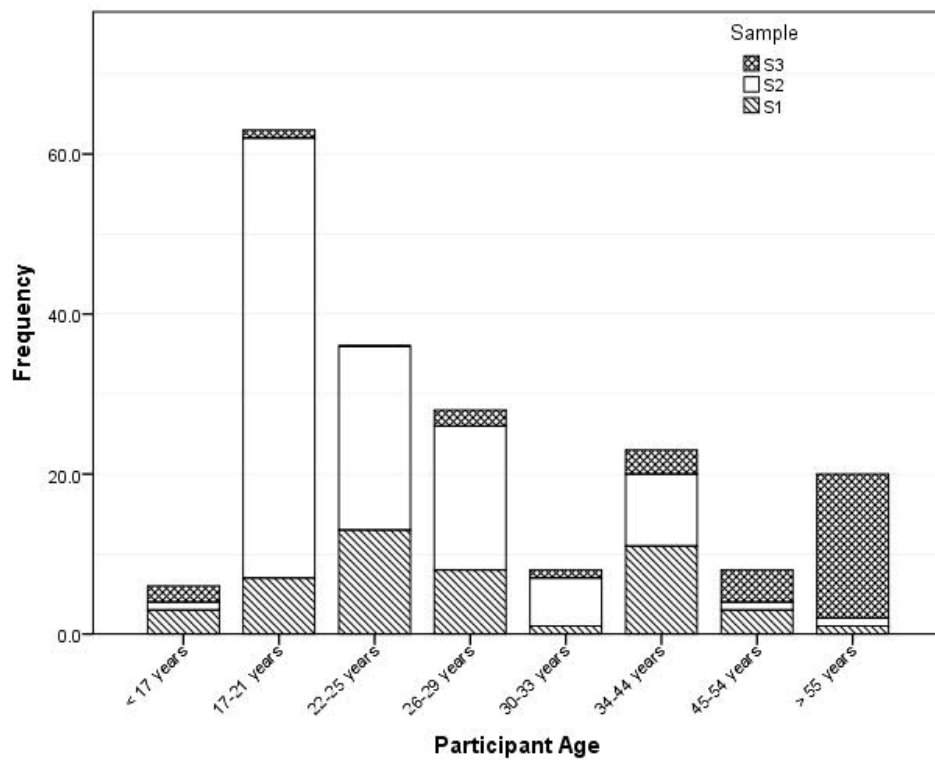
Sample composition – gender distribution * sample * treatment

	Sample I SM		Sample II UK		Sample III DE		Total	
	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C
Female	5	6	30	34	10	10	42	55
Male	17	19	27	23	2	9	45	50

These experiments are predominantly based on samples consisting of young adults, with the majority of participants between 17 and 21 years. Especially the second experimental intervention based on a university student sample contributes substantially to this participant group as the largest overall in this analysis. Participants in the first sample were predominantly in the early twenties, whereas participants in the third sample contributed disproportionately to the '55 and older' group. As the employed measurement item was initially geared towards students and not changed in order to allow for better cross-sample comparability, the overview in the figure below is slightly distorted due to the uneven categorical distinctions:

Figure 2

Sample composition – Participant Age



5.2 Non-response and partial completion

With the experimental design relying on online-based survey questionnaires, non-responses and partial completion were an issue for all three of the experimental interventions discussed here. A brief overview of completion rates will explore specific factors that can reasonably be assumed to be related to non-responses here, and extent to which partial and non-responses will affect the following analysis.

This first experiment initially attracted a group of 102 participants who accepted the invitation to participate in the experiment, out of which 34 did not

proceed beyond the initial exposure to the visual stimuli. These participants almost exclusively accepted the conditions and general instructions set out in the landing page of the experiment, and only ceased their participation after being introduced to the specific topic and *modus operandi* of the research.³⁸ The remaining group of 68 participants who offered either a complete or partial set of data points are used in the analysis here.

For the first set of quality evaluation indicators the full set of $n = 68$ is available, with the majority of partial respondents ceasing participation in the experiment after completing the first set of quality evaluation items but without fully completing this first part of the experiment ($n = 13$). A minority of subjects stopped participation either after completing the second set of quality evaluation items ($n = 2$), or after completing the first ($n = 4$) or second ($n = 2$) set of energy use items. As listed above, a total of 47 subjects fully participated in this experimental intervention.

For the second experimental intervention a sample of students from different UK universities was contacted, with 181 subjects in total responding to the invitation email by visiting the survey platform. Out of these, 131 participants completed at least parts of the questionnaire (see above).

Students were invited to participate at seven UK higher education institutions, with response levels equivalent to the total size of the student bodies contacted: Out of these 181 students responding to the invitation 52 were recruited from Northumbria University, 47 from Birmingham University, 29 from Strathclyde and 22 students from Glasgow University. Newcastle University, Edinburgh University and Dundee University each contributed less than 10 students to the sample. Equivalent to these, the majority of participants who fully completed the entire experiment were

³⁸ Out of this group of 34 participants, 31 ceased participation after reading Q4 (cf. Appendix B1), introducing the topic of refrigerators specifically, and preparing them to look at and rate images of the same.

recruited from the same four universities, with Birmingham (33), Northumbria (29), Glasgow (15) and Strathclyde (13) students contributing most proportionally to the total sample composition. It is noteworthy that the difference between initial response and full completion is largest for the group of Strathclyde students – slightly surprising as all students received exactly the same invitation email linked to exactly the same online experiment. The only difference in recruitment was a slight variation in time as well as a different member of staff forwarding and thus ‘endorsing’ the invitation message. While in all other cases these messages were sent out by (senior) academics identified as such in their emails, the group of Strathclyde students was contacted by a member of the clerical staff. However, with the comparatively small number of respondents per group at this stage this can only be an anecdotal note of interest, potentially valuable for further investigation of effective recruiting methods for further online experimental studies.

A disappointing observation upon further investigation of the response and completion rates was the relatively high number of prospective participants who responded to the initial email invitation but did not start the experiment itself; these were subsequently recorded as non-complete. 50 participants out of the student sample thus have to be disregarded in this analysis, as either after exposure to the landing page presenting the general outline of the experiment and rights of the participant, or after exposure to the (control or treatment) visual stimuli these subjects discontinued their participation in the experiment. These 50 participants constitute about 28% of the subjects that responded to the invitation to participate, compared to less than 10% of participants who partially completed the study, and over 62% who fully completed the study (see below). At the same time there is also an encouraging dimension to the fact that a group of almost a third of the initially interested subjects decided to cease participation right at the beginning of the study: This suggests that it was likely a lack of interest in the purported topic of research that lead subjects to close their browser windows prematurely, rather than poor design of the

questionnaire itself. In contrast, there is a substantially lower proportion of participants dropping out of the survey after responding to at least one full question, a point at which a high drop-out rate could be related to a suboptimal presentation or tiring experimental design.

Out of the remaining 131 subjects who participated in the experiment all completed the first set of quality evaluation indicators, with 9 participants not completing the second set of quality evaluations and a further four subjects discontinuing participation before fully completing the entire first part of the survey. Four additional participants did not complete the following second part of the experiment.

The first two samples are similar with the amount of participants who initially responded but ceased participation without answering any questions around 30% in both cases, albeit a bit higher in the first sample where no financial incentive was offered. Partial completion rates are higher for the first than for the second sample, with partial completes clustering towards the beginning of the survey in the case of the UK student sample. Here participants decided to discontinue participation quickly, whereas the case of participants dropping out of the study at later stages is a more frequent occurrence in the first sample. In total, partial completion rate in the first sample is more than twice as high as in the second sample. Both this higher rate as well as the different modalities of partial completion can be credibly explained by the lack of financial incentives in the first sample.

Table 4

Sample non-responses: participation rate per sample

Participation Rate	Sample I SM		Sample II UK		Sample III DE		Total	
	n	% ³⁹	n	%	n	%	n	%
No response ⁴⁰ (drop-out after briefing)	8	7.843%	6	3.315%	3	7.5%	17	5.263%
No response ⁴¹ (drop-out after stimulus)	26	25.49%	44	24.309%	4	10%	74	22.91%
Completed part 1.1.	13	12.745%	13	7.182%	2	5%	28	8.669%
Completed part 1.2.	2	1.96%	4	2.21%	0	0%	6	1.858%
Completed part 2.1. ⁴²	4	3.922%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1.238%
Completed part 2.2.	2	1.96%	1	0.552%	0	0%	3	0.929%
Completed all	47	46.078%	113	62.43%	31	77.5%	191	59.133%
Total	102	100%	181	100%	40	100%	323	100%

In terms of non- and partial completion the third sample, based on adult German participants, exhibits two marked differences in comparison with the first two samples: for one, initial non-participation (after briefing as well as after stimuli exposure) is markedly lower, furthermore the rate of partial completes is markedly lower overall as well. With almost 80% of all initially attracted subjects fully completing the study based on the same financial incentive as available in study 2, it goes to show that depending on experimental context – most notably different sampling and recruitment methods – the effect of financial incentives on participation and completion rates is seldom the sole building block of building reliable data sets.

³⁹ Rounded to 0.001

⁴⁰ Only Q2 and (in some cases) Q4 displayed, ceased participation before first stimulus image was displayed.

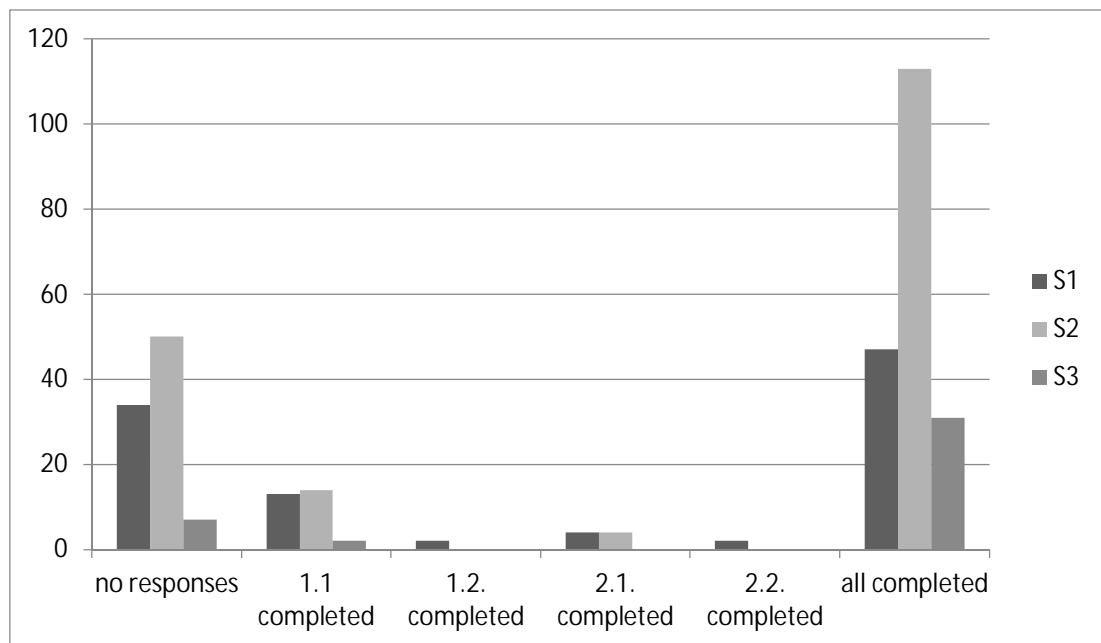
⁴¹ Briefing questions displayed, visual stimuli either fully or partly displayed but no single question answered.

⁴² Includes full completion of section 1 and additional full or partial completion of section 2.

Overall, with almost 60% of all subjects fully completing this study the experimental design itself seems reasonably successful in terms of avoiding alienation of participants during the duration of the study. Working in combination with the offered financial incentive, this can be interpreted as an encouraging source of feedback for this aspect of the experimental design. It should be noted, however, that this reasonably high completion rate of 60% is only in relation to the total of potential subjects reacting to the initial invitation emails at all – with the number of prospective participants that received such an invitation but who did not respond at all remaining considerably higher.

Figure 3

Sample non-responses: experiment completion as percentage of participants



With financial incentives being used for recruitment in the second but not in the first sample being one of the key differences between the two, it is likely that this incentive contributed to counteract a tiring effect that increases the likelihood of non-responses towards the end of a survey-based experiment, especially for short- to medium-length experiments with a high number of Likert-scale measures.

While the above does not surmount to an in-depth analysis of effective survey design, a further look as to potential improvements in respect to the design and presentation of this experimental outline could be helpful, as improvements in this area may contribute to increased response rates in future implementations of this or similar experiments.

5.3 Perceived Quality Evaluations

This part of the study focusses on the differences in perceived quality evaluations by participants as recorded in the experimental interventions. To this purpose we explore the dataset in respect to potential differences between the reactions of participants in the treatment and control conditions to the exposure to their respective visual stimuli. As mentioned above, implicit exposure to the treatment stimuli is expected to be positively correlated with the perceived quality indicators used here.

This part of the analysis relies on three parts of the survey questionnaire. The first two questions record different aspects of participants' product quality evaluations: "Please give your overall feelings or impressions toward using this model of fridge",⁴³ and "How would you judge what the product does for you?"⁴⁴ For each of these questions ten different measurement items are available; these will be used for the creation of two measurement scales qa01 and qa02 respectively. The third section of the questionnaire relevant to the analysis of perceived quality

⁴³ cf. Appendix B1. Q22; Q82; Q104; Q112

⁴⁴ cf. Appendix B1. Q23; Q83; Q106; Q114

evaluations is a set of four questions on monetary evaluations.⁴⁵ Data collected here will be discussed for the three samples below as applicable.

5.3.1 Scale Creation and independent sample t-tests

In a first step, two sets of questions were used to create scales to measure perceived product quality. Each of these two scales was built on ten individual items, combining at first Q22_1 up to and including Q22_10 (and equivalent Q82_1 up to and including Q82_10) data for the first scale qa01, and combining items Q23_1 up to and including Q23_10 (and equivalent Q83_1 up to and including Q83_10) data for a second scale qa02. In the early stage of the analysis this was first done with data from the initial sample I 'social media'.

The first scale qa01 was built from ten different questionnaire items, with each item exploring one possible dimension of the perceived evaluation the participants had of the product image. Asked for their overall feelings towards the displayed product, these ten items offered different pairings of adjectives as end points to a seven point Likert scale. Participants could choose to rate the product e.g. as unpleasant or pleasant (item 5), with a value of one corresponding to the negative and a value of seven corresponding to the positive end of the evaluation. The value for all ten items is positively correlated with positive evaluations. Apart from the unpleasant/pleasant pairing the other items used were unsatisfactory/satisfactory, bad/good, awful/nice, negative/positive, unsafe/safe, common/distinctive, unattractive/attractive, useless/useful, low quality/high quality.

⁴⁵ Cf. Appendix B1.: "Regarding the product design, would you say you..." (Q25; Q84; Q107; Q115), "What is the most you would be willing to pay for the model in the image?" (Q28; Q85; Q108; Q116), "What would you expect the retail price for this model to be?" (Q29; Q86; Q109; Q117), "If you were to buy a fridge freezer now, would this model be one you would consider?" (Q30; Q87; Q110; Q118).

For qa01, testing inter-item correlations across all available data showed satisfactory high correlations between the analysed items:

Table 5

Perceived Quality Evaluation Scale: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Q22_1: Satisfactory	Q22_2: Good	Q22_3: Nice	Q22_4: Positive	Q22_5: Pleasant	Q22_6: Safe	Q22_7: Distinctive	Q22_8: Attractive	Q22_9: Useful	Q22_10: High Quality
Q22_1: Satisfactory	1.000	.392	.539	.592	.531	.339	.089	.245	.438	.379
Q22_2: Good	.392	1.000	.576	.658	.508	.391	.208	.490	.375	.542
Q22_3: Nice	.539	.576	1.000	.746	.601	.270	.337	.572	.247	.508
Q22_4: Positive	.592	.658	.746	1.000	.551	.429	.258	.449	.369	.410
Q22_5: Pleasant	.531	.508	.601	.551	1.000	.422	.350	.654	.520	.595
Q22_6: Safe	.339	.391	.270	.429	.422	1.000	.085	.230	.499	.407
Q22_7: Distinctive	.089	.208	.337	.258	.350	.085	1.000	.468	.193	.435
Q22_8: Attractive	.245	.490	.572	.449	.654	.230	.468	1.000	.336	.635
Q22_9: Useful	.438	.375	.247	.369	.520	.499	.193	.336	1.000	.513
Q22_10: High Quality	.379	.542	.508	.410	.595	.407	.435	.635	.513	1.000

Item Q22_7 (as the measurement for perceived distinctive quality of product images) with the lowest correlation to the remaining items in the majority of cases, this item was dropped for the final combined qa01 scale. The Cronbach's Alpha value for qa01 based on the remaining 9 items is .886 (n=68), a respectably high value.

Comparing the mean values of the qa01 scale for treatment and control condition show that $t_{(66)} = -.866$, $p = .39$. For qa01 the measured differences are not statistically significant to reject H_0 .

Table 6

Perceived Quality Evaluation Scale: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Combined Perceived Quality 01	Equal variances assumed	1.567	.215	-.866	66	.390	-1.64583	1.90011	-5.43953	2.14786
	Equal variances not assumed			-.846	52.339	.402	-1.64583	1.94620	-5.55057	2.25890

However, statistically significant results are found for two of the component indicators, with $t(66) = -2.045$, $p = .045$ for Q22_2 ("product is good") and $t(66) = -2.344$, $p = (0.22)$ for Q22_4: ("product is positive"):

Table 7

Perceived Quality Evaluation Scale: Independent Samples Test (selected items)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Q22_2: Good	Equal variances assumed	1.009	.319	-2.045	66	.045	-.552	.270	-1.091	-.013
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.010	56.524	.049	-.552	.275	-1.102	-.002
Q22_4: Positive	Equal variances assumed	.395	.532	-2.344	66	.022	-.618	.264	-1.145	-.092
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.317	60.387	.024	-.618	.267	-1.151	-.085

Equivalent to the above steps the second set of questionnaire items describing perceived quality evaluations of the product images in question were converted into a scale qa02 to allow for further comparisons of means.

In a slight variation of the umbrella question for the ten previous questionnaire items, participants' judgements of what they expected the product to do for them were enquired for ten different pairs of adjectives. Each item was again rated using a seven point Likert scale, with values positive correlated with positive evaluations for all ten items. Here the pairings were: impractical/practical, unnecessary/necessary, not functional/functional, not sensible/sensible, unhelpful/helpful, inefficient/efficient, harmful/beneficial, not handy/handy, not problem solving/problem solving, ineffective/effective.

As reported above the total n for this second measurement of perceived product quality was smaller by 9 missing cases in comparison with the previous qa01 measurement. For the total of n = 59 an initial reliability analysis showed similar strong positive correlations between the individual items described above:

Table 8

Perceived Quality Evaluation Scale 2: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Q23_1: Practical	Q23_2: Necessary	Q23_3: Functional	Q23_4: Sensible	Q23_5: Helpful	Q23_6: Efficient	Q23_7: Beneficial	Q23_8: Handy	Q23_9: Problem Solving	Q23_10: Effective
Q23_1: Practical	1.000	.435	.714	.626	.820	.708	.621	.743	.367	.681
Q23_2: Necessary	.435	1.000	.610	.359	.606	.498	.478	.258	.636	.677
Q23_4: Functional	.714	.610	1.000	.546	.804	.722	.583	.655	.480	.851
Q23_4: Sensible	.626	.359	.546	1.000	.599	.609	.485	.674	.347	.494
Q23_5: Helpful	.820	.606	.804	.599	1.000	.694	.612	.688	.507	.792
Q23_6: Efficient	.708	.498	.722	.609	.694	1.000	.647	.557	.340	.663
Q23_7: Beneficial	.621	.478	.583	.485	.612	.647	1.000	.523	.310	.552
Q23_8: Handy	.743	.258	.655	.674	.688	.557	.523	1.000	.281	.600
Q23_9: Problem Solving	.367	.636	.480	.347	.507	.340	.310	.281	1.000	.526
Q23_10: Effective	.681	.677	.851	.494	.792	.663	.552	.600	.526	1.000

The Cronbach's Alpha value for the above is .927, with the reliability analysis showing that only dropping the item 'Q23_9: Problem Solving' could potentially increase this value slightly to .933. With his potential gain only minimal all ten measurement items were combined into qa02.

Comparison of means using an independent samples t-test show again that differences in means on the qa02 variable between control and treatment group are not statistically significant, with $t_{(57)} = -.142$, $p = .888$:

Table 9

Perceived Quality Evaluation Scale 2: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Perceived Quality Evaluation 2	Equal variances assumed	2.592	.113	-.142	57	.888	-.39540	2.78537	-5.97301	5.18221
	Equal variances not assumed			-.143	51.779	.887	-.39540	2.76861	-5.95159	5.16079

In this case none of the component indicators measuring perceived product quality that make up qa02 individually show differences in means between treatment and control group that are statistically significant.

5.3.2 Considering outgroups with factorial ANOVA

However, a simple comparison of means is not sufficient here, as in this dataset the participants in both treatment and control condition are nationals of EU-member states (outgroup = 0) as well as members of non-EU countries (outgroup =

1)⁴⁶. Accordingly, experimental data should not only be analysed along the comparison of means for control and treatment condition, but along a 2x2 factorial design controlling for outgroup membership as well:

Figure 4

Factorial Design Schema:

		Visual Stimulus	
		treatment = 1	treatment = 0
outgroup variable	outgroup = 0		
	outgroup = 1		

Using factorial analysis of variance main effects of the independent factors as well as potential interaction effects can be explored. Guiding questions for the analysis are:

1. Is there a difference in the effects on product quality evaluation between the two levels of the visual stimulus variable (already partly answered above)?
2. Is there a difference in the effects on product quality evaluations between the two levels of the outgroup variable (EU member state nationality or non-EU member state nationality)?
3. Interaction effect: Is the effect of being exposed to visual stimuli including EU symbols (treatment = 1) or not (treatment = 0) different for participants with EU nationality (outgroup = 0) or others (outgroup = 1)?

⁴⁶ In this experiment, participants with nationalities from (non-EU) EEA member states (or corresponding location data, in case nationality data was not available) are analysed as part of the outgroup = 1 group.

Accordingly, there are three corresponding research hypotheses:

$$H_1: \bar{x}_{treatment} \neq \bar{x}_{control}$$

$$H_2: \bar{x}_{ingroup} \neq \bar{x}_{outgroup}$$

$$H_3: \bar{x}_{treatment \cdot ingroup} \neq \bar{x}_{treatment \cdot outgroup} \neq \bar{x}_{control \cdot ingroup} \neq \bar{x}_{control \cdot outgroup}$$

These hypotheses were tested with both combined scale indicators for perceived quality evaluations qa01 and qa02 as discussed above:

Table 10

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Combined Perceived Quality 1

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	Hypothesis	69781.316	1	69781.316	1038.202	.000
	Error	191.057	2.843	67.214 ^a		
treatment	Hypothesis	126.266	1	126.266	2.197	.234
	Error	174.519	3.036	57.484 ^b		
Outgroup	Hypothesis	137.097	2	68.548	1.209	.453
	Error	113.424	2	56.712 ^c		
random * outgroup	Hypothesis	113.424	2	56.712	.929	.400
	Error	3785.100	62	61.050 ^d		

a. .822 MS(outgroup) + .178 MS(Error)

b. .822 MS(treatment * outgroup) + .178 MS(Error)

c. MS(treatment * outgroup)

d. MS(Error)

Table 11

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Perceived Quality Evaluation 2

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	Hypothesis	63570.015	1	63570.015	1035.885	.000
	Error	232.989	3.797	61.368 ^a		
Treatment	Hypothesis	5.814	1	5.814	.102	.765
	Error	229.274	4.030	56.891 ^b		
Outgroup	Hypothesis	103.550	2	51.775	1.112	.473
	Error	93.112	2	46.556 ^c		
treatment * outgroup	Hypothesis	93.112	2	46.556	.390	.679
	Error	6322.602	53	119.294 ^d		

a. .858 MS(outgroup) + .142 MS(Error)

b. .858 MS(treatment * outgroup) + .142 MS(Error)

c. MS(treatment * outgroup)

d. MS(Error)

Using qa01, the results are accordingly $F_{(1,62)} = 2.2$, $p = .234$ and $F_{(1,62)} = 1.2$, $p = .453$ for the main effects of the treatment and outgroup variables respectively, and $F_{(1,62)} = .93$, $p = .4$ for the interaction effect. Using qa02, the results are $F_{(1,53)} = .1$, $p = .765$ and $F_{(1,53)} = 1.11$, $p = .473$ for the main effects of the treatment and outgroup variables respectively, and $F_{(1,53)} = .39$, $p = .679$ for the interaction effect.

Based on the above, none of the research hypotheses can be confirmed, as for all of the three effects considered p-values remain above the .05 threshold. However, it should be pointed out here that n of the outgroup variable is very small even for the dataset considered here, as the experiment aimed to mainly target participants from EU-member states.

5.3.3 Considering outgroups: truncating data and non-parametric analysis

Given the results above further exploration of the data was based on a truncated data set, dropping all cases for participants that could not unequivocally be assigned to the European 'ingroup' category from the sample I 'SM'. At no point during the experiment were participants of non-EU member states explicitly invited to participate, but as detailed above a subsection of the participants either primarily identified with a non-EU nationality or offered only partial information insufficient for assignment to the EU-ingroup category.

It is hypothesised that the expected effects after exposure to the visual stimuli are likely to be significantly less strong for participants not living in the EU for an extended period of time, and therefore not as closely familiar with everyday life in one of the EU countries as their counterparts identifying primarily with the nationality of one of the EU member states ('EU ingroup'). Information on participants' nationalities is here employed as an approximated estimate for a respective – albeit hard to quantify – satisfying familiarity of the subject with relevant purchasing scenarios and visual expressions of EU branding: Participants from one of the EU member states ('EU ingroup') are deemed likely to be familiar with the context these experimental interventions build upon, while participants identifying with other nationalities ('outgroup') are assumed likely to be unfamiliar with the same. This model does not capture non-EU nationals growing up in the EU (and thus in practice presenting similar familiarity as EU nationals) or EU nationals growing up or living for an extended period of time outside of the EU (and thus appearing on this dimension more similar to the assumed characteristics of non-EU nationals), which is a deficit potentially resulting in less accurate information. However, for the course of this research it is accepted that using explicit nationality as a proxy for a satisfying level of

familiarity with EU symbols and regulating actions can be an approximation only – albeit one that is both useful and defensible.

In this dataset the variable outgroup expresses this binary dichotomy between non-EU nationals and EU nationals, allowing further analysis to focus only on the data supplied by participants pertaining to the EU ingroup. Although truncating these cases is not an ideal scenario for the analysis from these experiments, the theoretical justification is there to proceed with further explorative steps focussing exclusively on data from EU participants.

For the remaining $n = 44$ ($n_{\text{treatment}} = 23$; $n_{\text{control}} = 21$) comparison of means showed the following:

Table 12

Independent Samples Test (Perceived Quality 01)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Perceived Quality 01	Equal variances assumed	.793	.378	.280	42	.781	.67495	2.40723	-4.18303	5.53293
	Equal variances not assumed			.275	34.278	.785	.67495	2.45117	-4.30494	5.65484

Table 13

Independent Samples Test (Perceived Quality 02)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Perceived Quality 02	Equal variances assumed	1.741	.194	.387	41	.701	1.25758	3.24828	-5.30246	7.81761
	Equal variances not assumed			.384	34.700	.704	1.25758	3.27798	-5.39913	7.91428

With $t(42) = .28$, $p = .781$ for the t test comparison of means between control and treatment groups using the qa01 variable, and $t(41) = .387$, $p = .701$ for the t test comparison of means between control and treatment groups using the qa02 variable no statistically significant results can be reported.

5.3.3.1 The small n problem: non-parametric analysis

Apart from the lack of statistically significant results the above analysis illustrates a problem predictable due to the small size of this dataset which here is statistically relevant: Although the exploration of the dataset so far employed fairly robust tools, key assumption for parametric statistics is that a sample is large enough to (theoretically) represent a given population. The small sample size primarily, but also the question design and non-significant results so far in conjunction together make it seem prudent to turn to non-parametric tools. In particular, to consider the extent of differences between treatment and control conditions for the remaining samples II and III, a series of Mann-Whitney U tests was ran.

By comparing the median scores instead of the mean scores of two samples by using a single dichotomous independent variable – here: exposure to the treatment condition – it is the appropriate non-parametric equivalent to the independent samples t-test, allowing us to assess significant differences between the treatment and control samples. It is robust against outliers and heavy tail distributions, and does not require a specific distribution of the dependent variable.

Before running the appropriate non-parametric tests as indicated, the scales for the two perceived product quality indicators have to be created for the remaining parts of the dataset as before. To this end, the steps of the initial analysis for the perceived quality indicators above were repeated, first for the aggregate total dataset, then for the remaining samples II UK and III DE. Out of practical considerations a more detailed overview of inter-item correlations for qa01 and qa02 is here included only for the total sample.

Table 14

Perceived Product Quality 1 Scale (qa01) for total sample

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Q22_1: Satisfactory	Q22_2: Good	Q22_3: Nice	Q22_4: Positive	Q22_5: Pleasant	Q22_6: Safe	Q22_8: Attractive	Q22_9: Useful	Q22_10: High Quality
Q22_1: Satisfactory	1.000	.574	.516	.632	.644	.386	.426	.518	.549
Q22_2: Good	.574	1.000	.604	.727	.597	.333	.533	.550	.500
Q22_3: Nice	.516	.604	1.000	.667	.606	.273	.684	.373	.463
Q22_4: Positive	.632	.727	.667	1.000	.672	.381	.578	.540	.486
Q22_5: Pleasant	.644	.597	.606	.672	1.000	.436	.635	.497	.557
Q22_6: Safe	.386	.333	.273	.381	.436	1.000	.206	.382	.432
Q22_8: Attractive	.426	.533	.684	.578	.635	.206	1.000	.359	.506
Q22_9: Useful	.518	.550	.373	.540	.497	.382	.359	1.000	.454
Q22_10: High Quality	.549	.500	.463	.486	.557	.432	.506	.454	1.000

Note. As for the Sample I SM scale construction, Q22_7 was found to be a slight outlier in terms of inter-item correlations. The remaining nine items are all highly correlated, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of .902 (n = 224).

Table 15

Reliability Analysis: Perceived Product Quality 2 Scale (qa02) for total sample

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Q23_1: Practical	Q23_2: Necessary	Q23_3: Functional	Q23_4: Sensible	Q23_5: Helpful	Q23_6: Efficient	Q23_7: Beneficial	Q23_8: Handy	Q23_9: Problem Solving	Q23_10: Effective
Q23_1: Practical	1.000	.565	.676	.632	.742	.537	.583	.694	.347	.614
Q23_2: Necessary	.565	1.000	.575	.508	.578	.464	.561	.413	.433	.597
Q23_3: Functional	.676	.575	1.000	.529	.661	.628	.524	.577	.369	.708
Q23_4: Sensible	.632	.508	.529	1.000	.585	.516	.534	.628	.343	.512
Q23_5: Helpful	.742	.578	.661	.585	1.000	.517	.530	.703	.513	.581
Q23_6: Efficient	.537	.464	.628	.516	.517	1.000	.549	.488	.283	.622
Q23_7: Beneficial	.583	.561	.524	.534	.530	.549	1.000	.535	.311	.494
Q23_8: Handy	.694	.413	.577	.628	.703	.488	.535	1.000	.340	.484
Q23_9: Problem Solving	.347	.433	.369	.343	.513	.283	.311	.340	1.000	.376
Q23_10: Effective	.614	.597	.708	.512	.581	.622	.494	.484	.376	1.000

Note. As before, no single items were dropped for the creation of the qa02 scale for the total sample. The Cronbach's Alpha value of .915 (n=203) suggests all ten individual items are suitable for scale creation.

The same scales qa01 and qa02 were used for the analysis of samples I SM, II UK, and III DE, and while inter-item correlation was reviewed for each of the individual samples a more detailed overview is omitted here. The individual items were deemed similarly well suited for scale creation: In the first sample I SM, the Cronbach's Alpha was .875 (qa01, n = 60) and .925 (qa02, n = 51); in the second sample II UK the Cronbach's Alpha was .915 (qa01, n = 131) and .915 (qa02, n =

121); in the third sample III DE the Cronbach's Alpha was .880 (qa01, $n = 33$) and .874 (qa02, $n = 31$). The qa02 scale was computed additively out of ten individual items in each case, the qa01 scale out of the same nine items as above: Q22_7 was omitted in each case both for consistency reasons, but also because in each case it proofed to be the worst performing item in terms of its impact on Cronbach's Alpha values.

A series of Mann-Whitney U tests was run to determine if there were any significant differences in participants' perceived product quality scores between members of the treatment and of the control condition. An initial test was run for the total sample, with distribution of scores for treatment and control conditions judged sufficiently similar to allow for comparison of median scores. Median perceived quality scores were $M_{\text{control}} = 38$ ($n = 122$) and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 39$ ($n = 102$) for the first product quality scale qa01, and $M_{\text{control}} = 48$ ($n = 107$) and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 51$ ($n = 96$) for the second product quality scale qa02. As per the tests they were not found to be different to a statistically significant extent, neither for qa01 ($U = 6716$, $p = .306$) nor for qa02 ($U = 5874$, $p = .077$).

Further Mann-Whitney U tests were run for the individual samples to determine if there were statistically significant differences in perceived quality scores between participants exposed to treatment or control stimuli respectively. For the sample I SM, median scores for the qa01 variable were $M_{\text{control}} = 32.5$ ($n = 32$) and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 34$ ($n = 28$), and for qa02 $M_{\text{control}} = 32.5$ ($n = 32$), $M_{\text{treatment}} = 34$ ($n = 28$). As with the total sample, no statistically significant difference in median scores between control and treatment conditions could be recorded: For qa01 $U = 502$, $p = .422$; for qa02 $U = 354$, $p = .584$.

For the sample II UK, median perceived quality scores were $M_{\text{control}} = 42$ ($n = 71$) and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 42.5$ ($n = 60$) for qa01, and $M_{\text{control}} = 49$ ($n = 63$) and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 51$ ($n = 58$) for qa02 respectively. Here as well no statistically significant link between

perceived quality scores and treatment condition could be observed, neither for qa01 ($U = 2152.5$, $p = .917$), nor for qa02 ($U = 2148$, $p = .095$).

In the third and smallest sample III DE we can record median perceived quality scores of $M_{\text{control}} = 34$ ($n = 19$), $M_{\text{treatment}} = 40$ ($n = 14$) for qa01, and $M_{\text{control}} = 47$ ($n = 19$) and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 45$ ($n = 12$) for qa02. As before, for this sample also no statistically significant difference between perceived quality scores and stimulus exposure can be reported, with $U = 171.5$, $p = .163$ (for qa01), and $U = 117.5$, $p = .889$, using an exact sampling distribution for U in both cases.

Table 16

Overview Median Values Perceived Product Quality Scale 1 (qa01)

Median Values				
	Sample I SM	Sample II UK	Sample III DE	Total
Treatment	34	42.5	40	39
Control	32.5	42	34	38
Total	33	42	38	38.5

Table 17

Overview Median Values Perceived Product Quality Scale 2 (qa02)

Median Values				
	Sample I SM	Sample II UK	Sample III DE	Total
Treatment	49	51	45	51
Control	47	49	47	48
Total	47	51	47	49

Figure 5
Total Sample: Perceived Product Quality I (qa01)

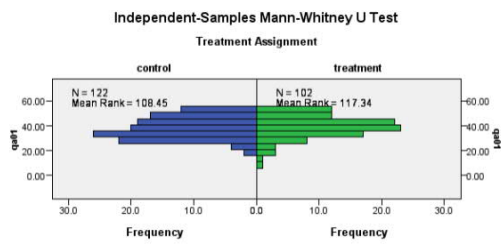


Figure 6
Total Sample: Perceived Product Quality II (qa02)

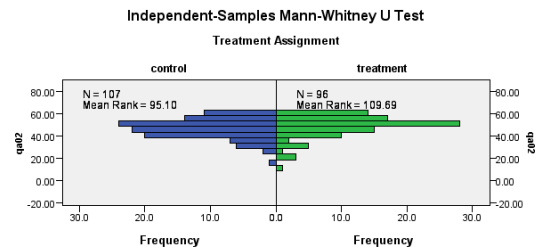


Figure 7
Sample I SM: Perceived Product Quality I (qa01)

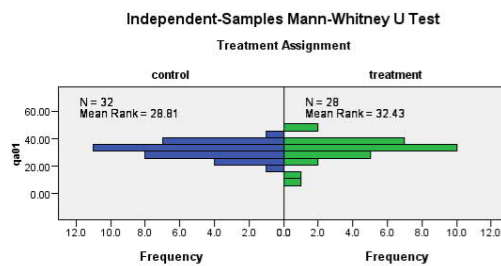


Figure 8
Sample I SM: Perceived Product Quality II (qa02)

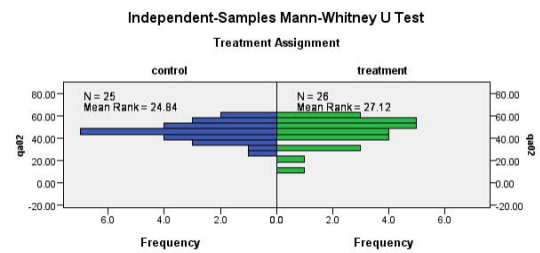


Figure 9
Sample II UK: Perceived Product Quality I (qa01)

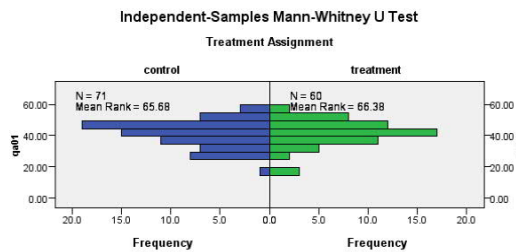


Figure 10
Sample II UK: Perceived Product Quality II (qa02)

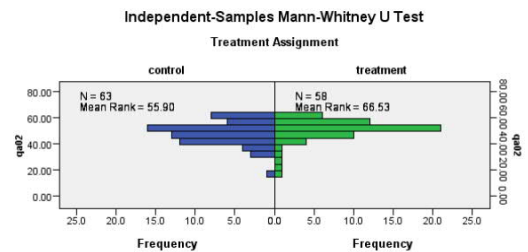


Figure 11
Sample III DE: Perceived Product Quality I (qa01)

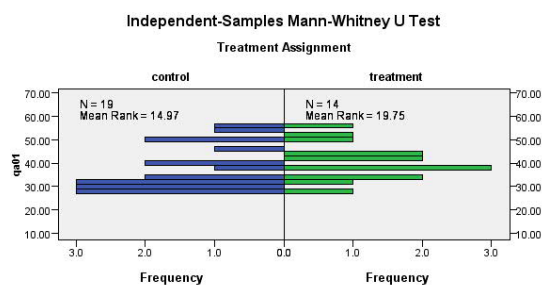
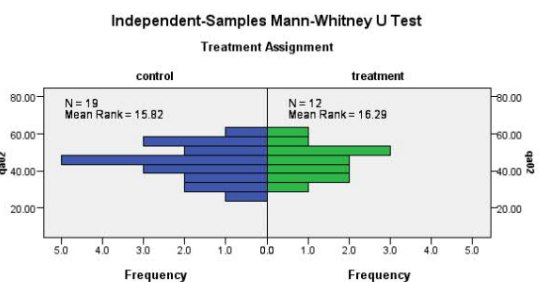


Figure 12
Sample III DE: Perceived Product Quality II (qa02)



5.3.3.2 Perceived quality evaluations: non-parametric tests II

In addition to these scale items four additional items were included in the experiment to assess how participants evaluated the fridges shown in this hypothetical purchasing scenario. These solicit explicit further evaluations of the perceived product quality from participants: a financial evaluation covering the dimensions of fair and expected pricing, an indicator showing whether or not participants would consider the presented model in a purchasing scenario, and an aggregate general evaluation of the product.⁴⁷

In line with earlier assumptions, working hypotheses for these measures expect higher – i.e. more positive evaluations – for subjects in the treatment condition:

1. Subjects exposed to the EU flag are expected to have a higher overall opinion of the presented products in comparison to participants exposed to control stimuli (Q25).
2. Subjects exposed to the EU flag are expected to place higher financial value on the products presented in the visual cues, both in terms of a financial value that is deemed fair and a financial value that is deemed a realistic price in a purchasing scenario in natura (Q28, Q29).
3. Subjects exposed to the EU flag are expected to demonstrate higher disposition to consider the shown product in a purchasing decision (Q30).

⁴⁷ Cf. Appendix B1.: “Regarding the product design, would you say you...” (Q25; Q84; Q107; Q115), “What is the most you would be willing to pay for the model in the image?” (Q28; Q85; Q108; Q116), “What would you expect the retail price for this model to be?” (Q29; Q86; Q109; Q117), “If you were to buy a fridge freezer now, would this model be one you would consider?” (Q30; Q87; Q110; Q118).

For the analysis variables Q25 (general product evaluation) and Q30 (purchase consideration) were recoded according to the direction of the above hypotheses; for Q25 in addition dks were marked as such and not included in the analysis. Q28, Q29 and Q30 were not designed to record dks in the first place.

Initial explorative analysis of the data with simple crosstabulation showed that distribution across these four measurements is very similar for both control and treatment groups: Most participants decided on a fairly positive evaluation of the product in both groups, leading even to an exact equivalent n of positive evaluations in some of the smaller samples (e.g. Q28, sample I).

People's general evaluation of the product quality (Q25) tend to positive, with 'a little' or 'a lot' as most positive responses distributed fairly uniformly between control and treatment conditions. Overall, the number of participants with extremely and moderately positive evaluations in the control group was even higher than in the treatment group for the total sample ($n_{\text{control}}=74$, $n_{\text{treatment}}=72$). All individual samples exhibit the same clustering of responses in the two most positive categories, with the slightly more positive reactions in the control group in sample I SM ($n_{\text{control}}=17$, $n_{\text{treatment}}=15$) and sample III DE ($n_{\text{control}}=13$, $n_{\text{treatment}}=9$), and the trend slightly reversed in sample II UK ($n_{\text{control}}=44$, $n_{\text{treatment}}=48$).

When participants are asked for concrete financial evaluations of the product (Q28) in this virtual purchasing scenario, it stands out that across all samples and conditions the midpoint response option is the one most commonly chosen: Most people chose a value of 250-499 of their local currency to be a fair asking price for the product by a considerable margin, with no clear pattern between treatment and control condition. Note that a very low number of respondents (5 out of 196) picked the '1000-1999 EUR/GBP' option, and none at all were recorded for the topmost 'more than 2000 EUR/GBP' option. Participants were expected to converge towards midpoint responses especially where no strong latent attitude was targeted – people

were not expected to have overly strong reactions to a utilitarian price calculation. However, the almost complete absence of outlier responses in combination with the midpoint clustering suggests that the design of these questions for this scenario could be improved for potential further iterations.

It is notable that this picture changes only slightly for the second financial evaluation (Q29) – the ‘250-499 EUR/GBP’ category remains the most popular one, the most extreme response category is again entirely avoided although slightly more participants picked slightly higher responses for the expected price than for the fair price in the previous measurement.

The same is also true when participants are asked how they would actually decide in this purchasing scenario: would they buy the product presented to them (Q30)? Considering no ‘don’t know’ option was included it is unsurprising to see responses clustering around the midpoint again, with the non-committal option ‘one I’d be happy to consider but wouldn’t necessarily choose’ the most popular across all samples and conditions. Only a single respondent out of 194 chose the most decidedly positive option (‘The only model I would consider’), while a total of 14 participants chose the most negative extreme (‘I probably wouldn’t consider it’).

However, analysis of absolute n across the different response categories and conditions can be slightly misleading, as both the random condition assignment as well as the random nature in which participants ceased participation during the experimental intervention result in differently sized condition groups across samples. Further analysis is necessary in order to be able to reject the above hypotheses.

Table 18

Total Sample: Mean and Median Values

	Treatment Assignment								
	Control			Treatment			Total		
	Mean	Median	N	Mean	Median	N	Mean	Median	N
General Evaluation (Q25)	3.00	3.00	98	2.96	3.00	89	2.98	3.00	187
Fair Price (Q28)	2.82	3.00	104	2.89	3.00	92	2.85	3.00	196
Expected Price (Q29)	3.14	3.00	104	3.42	3.00	92	3.28	3.00	196
Would you consider this model (Q30)	2.83	3.00	104	2.91	3.00	90	2.87	3.00	194

Median values are stable across all measurements and conditions, with only the smallest sample III DE deviating with median values of four for both control and treatment condition on one measurement (Q29). A series of further tests was run in order to ascertain if as a result of the absence of patterns observed above the H_0 can be confidently confirmed for all four measures. Among these a series of Mann-Whitney U tests was run, confirming no statistically significant difference in product evaluation scores between control and treatment conditions for Q25, Q28, and Q30 across all individual samples and the total sample.

Table 19

Perceived Product Quality items: Mann-Whitney U Test Results

	Sample I SM		Sample II UK		Sample III DE		Total Sample	
	Mann-Whitney U	Sig.	Mann-Whitney U	Sig.	Mann-Whitney U	Sig.	Mann-Whitney U	Sig.
General Evaluation (Q25)	203.5	.206	1562	.969	133	.232 ⁴⁸	4335	.939
Fair Price (Q28)	270	.890	1960	.194	118	.889 ⁴⁹	5116	.367
Expected Price (Q29)	308	.452	2094	.039*	151	.141 ⁵⁰	5639.5	.021*
Would you consider this model (Q30)	259	.654	1732	.670	141	.287 ⁵¹	4879	.515

Based on this analysis, participants in the treatment condition do not come to an overall more positive evaluation of the product in question than their counterparts in the control condition. The price they deem fair is not significantly higher after being treated with the EU flag stimulus, and the proportion of respondents who expressed to be positively inclined towards purchasing the presented model is not significantly higher for the treated part of the sample. Accordingly, the working hypotheses formulated above have to be rejected for Q25, Q28, and Q30.

⁴⁸ Exact Sig.

⁴⁹ Exact Sig.

⁵⁰ Exact Sig.

⁵¹ Exact Sig.

Figure 13
Q29 Mann-Whitney U Test (Total Sample)

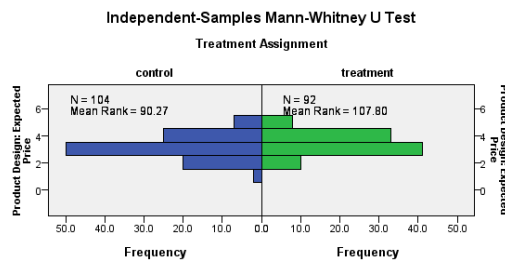
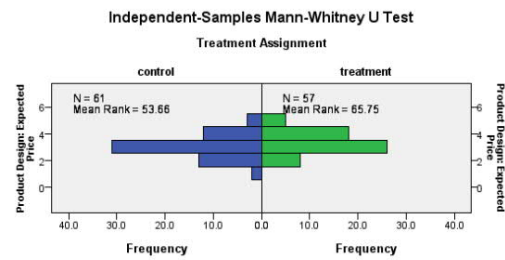


Figure 14
Q29 Mann-Whitney U Test (Sample II UK)



The test results for Q29 give pause, showing statistically significant differences between control and treatment condition for the total sample as well as for the largest individual sample II UK. Mean rank for participants in the treatment conditions was 107.8 and 90.27 in the control condition, a statistically significant difference in the total sample. In the sample II UK, the mean rank was 65.75 in the treatment condition and 53.66 in the control condition. Note that the differences in price that participants expect to be charged by condition is not higher to a statistically significant degree for the samples I SM and III DE. It is certainly encouraging to observe statistically significant patterns of difference in the UK sample; however, caution is advised in interpreting this result. On a theoretical level, there is no clear reason why a German or mixed sample should not see an effect of significantly different price expectations than their UK counterpart, although this could be explained by the small effect size not being recorded pronounced enough in the two smaller samples. Furthermore, there is no immediately obvious theoretical reason why participants in the treatment condition should have significantly higher estimations of a price they expect to be charged on the open market, while at the same time remaining at the same level as their non-treated co-participants when it comes to their estimation of a fair price (Q28). Unless of course this measure inadvertently taps into a diffuse anti-EU sentiment instead of the positive boost through stimulus exposure theorised above: While the defacto quality assessment does not change for participants exposed to banal EU cues, their association of the

EU as an over-regulatory cost-driving actor could foster expectations of rising prices in a market situations once the EU is involved, even if included only mediated via a small logo. This line of interpretation, it needs be stressed, is highly speculative though.

Last but not least a practical concern remains: Repeatedly running the same test on discrete measurements like above carries the risk of alpha error accumulation, where the chance to unduly reject H_0 increases in conjunction with the number of repeated test measures. Taken these practical as well as theoretical aspects into considerations, despite the observable differences on the Q29 measurement between treatment and control condition for part of the sample it seems premature to conclusively reject H_0 .

Overall, based on the data presented here it is not possible to confirm the working hypothesis that the participants treated with visual stimuli containing EU imagery over the course of the experimental interventions differed in their product quality evaluations from the non-treated participants in the control condition to a statistically significant degree. Observed differences offered mixed patterns, and only show significant links for one measurement across one individual sample. No conclusive patterns can be observed here to sustain the assumption that treated participants evaluate product quality higher within the context of the virtual purchasing scenario presented here.

5.4 Perceived reliability of information

In the second part of the experiment the focus shifts from evaluation of the product in general to the participants' perception of the label specifically: In other words, to what extent do participants consider the information on this label to be reliable, and do they place trust in the displayed information to be accurate?

Main focus is here again on any potential differences between responses from subjects in the treatment and control conditions. As outlined in the previous chapter, it is assumed that participants exposed to the treatment stimuli would judge the accuracy of information displayed in conjunction with the label to be higher. It is also expected for participants in the treatment condition to express higher levels of trust in the positive effects of the EU's regulatory activities. In line with the overarching research questions, for this part of the analysis two working hypothesis will be considered:

1. Subjects exposed to the treatment stimuli are expected to judge information displayed in conjunction with the EU energy label as more accurate than participants exposed to a control stimulus (accuracy of information, Q65).
2. Subjects exposed to the treatment stimuli are expected to display higher levels of trust in regulatory actions within the context of the EU energy label than participants exposed to a control stimulus (trust in regulatory actions, Q67).

5.4.1 Information reliability indicator measurements

This second part of the experiment contained 10 items covering a variety of dimensions across which participants can rate how reliable they judge the information displayed in conjunction with the energy efficiency label to be.

While these two sets of items were originally included with the intention to allow for two additive scales – one to test for an aggregate measure of accuracy of information (Q65), and one to test for an aggregate measure of trust in regulatory actions (Q67), a more thorough analysis revealed the data to be not suitable for additive scale creation:

For the first set none of the individual items were recoded for the analysis – for all of these dimensions higher values were assumed to be corresponding to higher confidence in the reliability of displayed information: For the items label usefulness (Q65_1), influence on the buying decision (Q65_4), impact on product reputation (Q65_5), and information accuracy (Q65_6), positive values are coded in line with the expectation of our working hypothesis. Item Q65_2 was initially recoded to be inversed, based on the assumption that participants who viewed the label primarily as a marketing instrument would tend to distrust the veracity of information displayed here. The opposite seems to be the case: Strong positive responses on this indicator were also positively correlated with positive values on the remaining items of his measurement. For the purpose of this analysis the original item values will be used.

Table 20

Perceived information reliability 1: Inter-item Correlation Matrix

	The label is useful to me. (Q65_1)	The label is part of product marketing (Q65_2)	I would buy this product over products without a label. (Q65_4)	It is likely that manufacturers use this label to paint a better picture of their product. (Q65_5)	I expect the information on energy consumption on this label to be accurate. (Q65_6)
The label is useful to me. (Q65_1)	1.000	.121	.085	.067	.447
The label is part of product marketing (Q65_2)	.121	1.000	.186	.408	.028
I would buy this product over products without a label. (Q65_4)	.085	.186	1.000	.107	.125
It is likely that manufacturers use this label to paint a better picture of their product. (Q65_5)	.067	.408	.107	1.000	.081
I expect the information on energy consumption on this label to be accurate. (Q65_6)	.447	.028	.125	.081	1.000

Independent of this, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .488 the items are not suited for scale creation as planned. Dropping the marketing item (Q65_2) would furthermore reduce Cronbach's Alpha to .396. For this reason, no reliability scale was created for the analysis here.

Similarly, the second set of items (Q67) were found to be not suitable for scale creation. After analysis of inter-item correlation values two items were recoded to run in the opposite direction: First, participants who found the label very confusing were not expected to exhibit high trust in regulatory action, accordingly low values ('strongly disagree'/'disagree') were recoded as high values (Q67_3). Second, participants who saw the label as part of price-driving regulation were also similarly not expected to exhibit high trust in the label as an emblem of regulatory action,

accordingly low values ('strongly disagree'/'disagree') were again recoded as high values for the purpose of this analysis (Q67_4).

Table 21

Perceived information reliability 2: Inter-item Correlation Matrix

	It is good that manufacturers have to provide this data. (Q67_1)	Public institutions should be more involved in consumer protection. (Q67_2)	The energy label looks confusing to me. (Q67_3)	Regulation like this drives prices up for consumers. (Q67_4)	I trust public institutions to do a good job controlling that the data on the label is accurate. (Q67_5)
It is good that manufacturers have to provide this data. (Q67_1)	1.000	.324	.255	.106	.361
Public institutions should be more involved in consumer protection. (Q67_2)	.324	1.000	-.081	.066	.071
The energy label looks confusing to me (Q67_3)	.255	-.081	1.000	.123	.195
Regulation like this drives prices up for consumers (Q67_4)	.106	.066	.123	1.000	.194
I trust public institutions to do a good job controlling that the data on the label is accurate. (Q67_5)	.361	.071	.195	.194	1.000

For Q67 Cronbach's Alpha values are too low for reliable scale creation at .452. Further analysis in this chapter will be based on the recoded items Q67_3 and Q67_4.

Table 22

Descriptives: Treatment Assignment (Total Sample)

	control				treatment				Total			
	Mean	Mdn	SD	N	Mean	Median	SD	N	Mean	Median	SD	N
The label is useful to me. (Q65_1)	3.87	4.00	1.02	122	3.98	4.00	1.07	102	3.92	4.00	1.04	224
The label is part of product marketing (Q65_2)	3.82	4.00	1.04	122	3.75	4.00	1.09	102	3.79	4.00	1.06	224
I would buy this product over products without a label. (Q65_4)	3.27	3.00	1.21	122	3.21	3.00	1.27	102	3.24	3.00	1.24	224
It is likely that manufacturers use this label to paint a better picture of their product. (Q65_5)	3.73	4.00	1.06	122	3.85	4.00	.98	102	3.79	4.00	1.03	224
I expect the information on energy consumption on this label to be accurate. (Q65_6)	4.51	5.00	.81	122	4.26	4.00	.96	102	4.39	5.00	.89	224
It is good that manufacturers have to provide this data. (Q67_1)	4.49	5.00	.70	122	4.52	5.00	.61	102	4.50	5.00	.66	224
Public institutions should be more involved in consumer protection. (Q67_2)	4.15	4.00	.84	122	4.15	4.00	.81	102	4.15	4.00	.83	224
The energy label looks confusing to me (Q67_3)	3.52	4.00	1.20	122	3.61	4.00	1.15	102	3.56	4.00	1.18	224
Regulation like this drives prices up for consumers (Q67_4)	3.27	3.00	1.04	122	3.28	4.00	1.21	102	3.27	3.00	1.12	224
I trust public institutions to do a good job controlling that the data on the label is accurate. (Q67_5)	3.73	4.00	1.05	122	3.51	4.00	1.01	102	3.63	4.00	1.03	224

For the first set of indicators, modest differences in mean values can be observed in the total sample. Participants in the treatment condition find the label more useful than subjects in the control condition, but only by a small margin. Treated subjects tend to see the label as part of marketing efforts to a lesser extent, albeit only marginally so (Q65_2) – and on the similarly phrased Q65_5 this relationship is reversed again, with participants in the control condition less convinced the label is used to improve the image of the product. The most marked difference in mean values is recorded for Q65_6, where contrary to original assumptions participants in the control condition expected displayed information to be accurate to a higher extent than treated participants: Here a difference of means between M_{control} and $M_{\text{treatment}}$ was .25. Overall though, differences between mean values and SD values were mostly small with no obvious patterns. Median values were the same for all cases – except the abovementioned Q65_6, with $Mdn_{\text{control}}=5$ and $Mdn_{\text{treatment}}=4$.

The same pattern holds true for sample I SM, with overall negligible differences in means and no differences in medians except for Q65_6. Values for the control condition are larger here as well, with $Mdn_{\text{control}}=5$ and $Mdn_{\text{treatment}}=4$, and $M_{\text{control}} = 4.42$ and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 3.95$. In sample II UK, the aforementioned differences between values on item Q65_6 are less pronounced, with only a difference of .08 between mean values in favour of the control condition, and $Mdn_{\text{control}}=5$ and $Mdn_{\text{treatment}}=4.5$. However, more notable differences appear here for Q65_1, with $M_{\text{control}} = 3.59$ and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 3.93$, and $Mdn_{\text{control}} = Mdn_{\text{treatment}} = 4$. In sample III DE we can observe the largest number of differences in median values, with different medians in Q65_2, Q65_4, and Q65_6. This is somewhat unsurprising given the significantly smaller n in this sample, with only $n_{\text{treatment}} = 14$ and $n_{\text{control}} = 19$. Accordingly, some of the differences in mean values are also more pronounced than in other samples, notably with $M_{\text{control}} = 4.79$ and $M_{\text{treatment}} = 4.25$ (Q65_6), and finally $M_{\text{control}} = 4.68$ and $M_{\text{treatment}} =$

3.75 (Q65_2) – the latter the largest difference in means observed in the analysis in this chapter.

For the second set of indicators even smaller differences in mean values can be observed in the total sample: For the items Q67_2 and Q67_4 a difference in means of 0.01 and less is recorded, suggesting little difference between participants' views on public institutions' involvement in consumer protection or the impact of regulation on product pricing. The remaining differences between mean values in different conditions are not much larger; with a .22 difference for Q67_5 the largest observed difference. Median values are the same for all items when comparing conditions, the sole exception being Q67_4, where $Mdn_{control}=3$ and $Mdn_{treatment}=4$ and a comparatively large $SD_{treatment}$ (1.21) can be observed.

Looking at the individual samples, sample I SM shows slightly larger different mean values between conditions, although Q67_2 is by far the largest with $M_{control} = 3.81$ and $M_{treatment} = 4.15$. Median values here show differences of .5 or even 1 for all items except Q67_3, but this is not entirely unexpected considering the significantly smaller sample size. The above pattern of large similarities for the individual items between treatment and control continues in sample II UK. Again, mean and SD values remain very close together, with the only exception being Q67_5: Here we can record a larger difference between means, notably $M_{control} = 3.92$ and $M_{treatment} = 3.62$. For sample III DE larger differences were expected again due to the smaller sample size, which makes it all the more remarkable to see only minute differences in means of 0.01 for Q67_1 and Q67_2. For other items the differences between treatment and control condition are more pronounced again though; here Q67_4 stands out most with $M_{control} = 3.21$ and $M_{treatment} = 2.75$.

For a more detailed analysis of differences between the two conditions a series of Mann-Whitney U tests was performed. As before, it was identified as a suitable tool to determine differences in a between-subject design with one IV and

several ordinal DV. The results have been summarised in the following two tables, with the test results for all three individual samples and the total sample for the Q65 items in the first table, and the results for the Q67 items in the second table:

Table 23

Information Reliability 1: Mann-Whitney U Test Results

	Sample I SM		Sample II UK		Sample III DE		Total Sample	
	U	Sig.	U	Sig.	U	Sig. ⁵²	U	Sig.
Q65_1	245.5	.874	2074	.028*	103.5	.675	5025.5	.268
Q65_2	272.5	.619	1847.5	.410	62	.035*	4519	.764
Q65_4	231.5	.631	1769	.727	104	.704	4538	.810
Q65_5	263.5	.769	1844.5	.432	112.5	.952	4900.5	.454
Q65_6	196.5	.164	1550	.331	154	.130	3859	.024*

Table 24

Information Reliability 2: Mann-Whitney U Test Results

	Sample I SM		Sample II UK		Sample III DE		Total Sample	
	U	Sig.	U	Sig.	U	Sig.	U	Sig.
Q67_1	213.5	.92	1724.5	.766	111	.921	4426.5	.919
Q67_2	254.5	.222	1576.5	.542	118	.889	4364.5	.933
Q67_3	210.5	.989	1714	.833	135	.412	4538.5	.685
Q67_4	255	.216	1727.5	.774	92	.389	4551	.661
Q67_5	177.5	.374	1403.5	.096	105.5	.734	3794.5	.088

For the Q67 items the initial observations could be confirmed: The differences in these five ‘trust in regulatory action’ items between treatment and control conditions were not statistically significant, not for the three individual samples nor for the total sample. Note that for the sample III DE an exact sampling distribution for U was used. No consistent pattern is observable in the differences between median

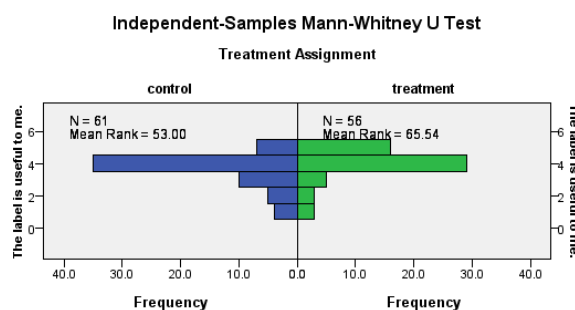
⁵² Exact Significance

scores, and on the basis of this the working hypotheses has to be rejected: Based on the data collected with the five Q67 measurements, we cannot conclusively say that participants exposed to the treatment stimuli expressed higher levels of trust in regulatory actions across the dimensions measured here.

For the Q65 items a more thorough analysis is necessary. As above, the differences in these five 'perceived information accuracy' items between treatment and control condition were checked for statistical significance across the three individual samples as well as the total sample. For items Q65_4 and Q65_5, no clear pattern could be established; differences between treatment and control condition were not found to be significant across all samples. Examining the remaining three items Q65_1, Q65_2, and Q65_3, the following was observed:

Differences between treatment and control condition were statistically significant for each item, but only for one sample each:

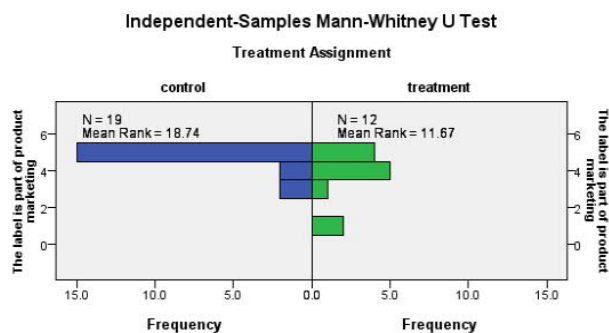
Figure 15
Q65_1 (Sample II UK)



As per figure 14, the scores for label usefulness (accuracy of information score Q65_1) were found to be statistically significantly higher ($U = 2074.5$, $p = .028$) in the treatment condition (mean rank = 65.54) than in the control condition (mean rank = 53). Note that this effect is true only for the sample II UK – the largest of the

individual samples – but no comparable statistically significant link was found for the Q65_1 item neither in the other two individual samples nor in the total sample.

Figure 16
Q65_2 (Sample III DE)



As per figure 15, the scores for 'label as part of marketing' (accuracy of information item Q65_2) were found to be statistically significantly different between treatment and control condition. Here the relationship is different though, with the scores in the control condition (mean rank = 18.74) higher than the scores in the treatment condition (mean rank = 11.67). This relationship was statistically significant at $p = .035$, using an exact sampling distribution for U ($U = 62$). Note that this effect can be observed only for the sample III DE, but not for any of the other two individual samples nor for the total sample.

Figure 17
Q65_6 (Total Sample)

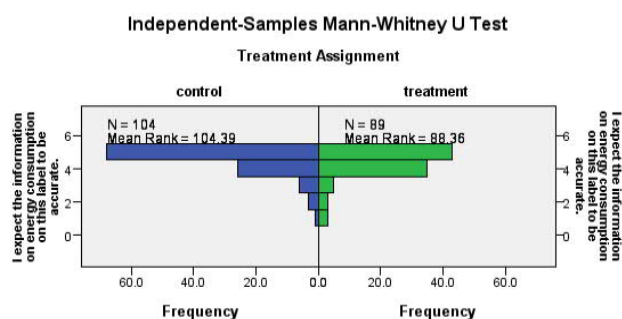


Figure 16 shows the last occurrence where differences between treatment and control conditions were found to be statistically significant. The scores for accuracy of information item Q65_6 ('I expect the information on the label to be accurate') showed statistically significant differences between treatment and control condition, with scores for the control condition again higher (mean rank = 104.39) than the scores for participants exposed to the treatment stimuli (mean rank 88.36). This difference was statistically significant at $p = .024$ with a test statistic of $U = 3859$. Note that this effect was observed only for the total sample, while no similar statistically significant connection could be ascertained for the Q65_6 item in the individual samples.

5.4.2 Discussion of information reliability indicator results

This part of the experiment focussed on how reliable participants judged the displayed information to be, and to what extent any differences between treatment and control condition could be observed in these interventions. The measurements were used to examine whether or not treated participants judged the available information to be more accurate and more trustworthy than their counterparts, however, based on the data gathered the two working hypotheses for this chapter cannot be confirmed.

Items in the first set of measurements were included to gather data on how accurate participants judged the displayed information to be. While all items were confirmed to be positively correlated to each other, these inter-item correlations were weaker than assumed, and it is important to note that while the examined dimensions are all topically connected here they cannot be treated as measurements of the same latent variable in the technical sense. Whether or not participants judge label information to be useful and accurate is indubitably connected to the potential for the

label display to have an impact on any potential purchasing decision – however, they are not the same phenomenon. Similarly, expecting an energy label to be part of the product marketing or part of the supplier's efforts to improve the image of a given product can be connected to an increase in distrust a participant exhibits in the veracity of the label's claims. Other subjects will not have this ingrained reaction to distrust marketing information though, which makes it impossible to treat results from these items here automatically as expressions of the same latent variable. For this reason, no single 'accuracy of information' score, and no single 'trust in regulatory action' score was calculated above.

The original expectation for treated participants to record higher scores could only be confirmed tentatively for a few items in a first step of the analysis. E.g., treated participants tended to report finding the label information more useful, and were more likely to recognise it as not being part of the marketing material. For other items the observed relationship ran contrary to expectations: Participants in the control condition reported a higher expectation to see accurate information displayed on the energy labels, and were also more favourably disposed towards buying the fictitious labelled product. It quickly became clear that the different individual samples also recorded different response patterns for the same item: E.g., a majority of treated participants in the UK sample found the label useful, whereas in the III DE and I SM sample instead participants in the control condition recorded higher usefulness responses. Only two items show a trend for all individual samples as well as the total sample: Generally, treated participants tended to acknowledge that manufacturers could use the label to improve the image of their product, an observation that is roughly in line with the expectation formulated in the working hypothesis for this chapter. Secondly, participants in the control condition generally expected the label information to be more accurate than their treated counterparts – an observation that was not expected when the study was designed. When it came to the impact of a display label on a prospective purchasing decision, no clear picture emerged: overall

as well as for the two smaller samples I SM and III DE, a majority of non-treated participants reported a more favourable attitude towards buying a labelled product, whereas for the sample II UK a slight majority of treated participants favoured this option and thus went conform with the original theoretical expectation.

For this part of the analysis again significant differences in sample size between the three individual samples were recorded. Furthermore, assigned conditions varied considerably in size herein, both due to the effect of random assignment as well as due to the fact that non-partial completions were not uniformly distributed across conditions. Therefore, a series of Mann-Whitney U tests were run to establish whether or not the observed differences in information accuracy scores between treatment and control condition were statistically significant.

The most notable finding of these tests is that for the sample II UK, participants in the treatment condition were found to report a higher usefulness of the label than non-treated subjects to a statistically significant degree. Mean values were about 10% higher for participants who were exposed to the EU energy label stimulus, an observation which goes conform with the direction of the working hypothesis: In the theoretical expectation, because participants are aware of the regulatory action of the EU in general and are reminded of this normalised EU involvement through exposure to the stimulus, treated subjects then respond to the marked role of the EU as a guarantor of informational reliability by judging the displayed information as more useful than their counterparts. Without regard for the wider context of these experimental interventions, this is apparently true for the usefulness item Q65_1: Subjects respond favourably to the marked EU involvement. It is to note though that this statistically significant link can only be found in the UK sample. Not only is this connection not significant for the other two samples, furthermore is the relationship inverted for the other two individual samples I SM and III DE: Here, mean values are (statistically non-significantly) larger in the control condition. With larger values

recorded for the control condition in the two smaller individual samples, and larger values recorded for the treatment condition in the largest individual sample II UK, it comes at no surprise that in the total sample values are still higher for the treatment condition than for the control condition, but not to a statistically significant degree. It appears that the effect confirmed to the UK sample, although in itself notable, was not large enough overall when viewed in conjunction with the data from other samples running in the opposite direction. While this is one of two occasions in this part of the analysis where arguably evidence confirming the theoretical assumptions formulated above was recorded, there is no clear theoretical reason available why this effect should be present only in a UK student context. Ideally, if all underlying theoretical expectations are indeed correct, these should hold up for a more mature German sample or a more mixed social media sample as well. In itself this finding deserves notice in so far as it offers tentative evidence that a utilitarian component could be recognised by participants exposed to visual stimuli cueing the regulatory capacity of the EU.

This finding alone, however, was judged insufficient to confirm the first working hypothesis for this chapter. Part of the reasoning is the unexplained lack of replicability of this finding in the other samples. Furthermore, despite this tentative evidence for the increased usefulness scores of treated participants, the opposite was observed for the final informational accuracy item (Q65_6): Here participants in the control condition exhibit consistently higher mean scores than treated subjects across all samples, i.e. subjects not exposed to the EU stimuli expected the displayed information to be accurate to a higher degree than their counterparts. For the total sample this link was found to be statistically significant, i.e. subjects overall judged information to be potentially less accurate to a significant degree after being exposed to EU imagery, an observation that runs against the hypothesised expectations here. It should be noted that this effect is again relatively small, too small to be recorded as statistically significant for the individual samples.

Taking both of these observations into consideration in conjunction, a higher usefulness score in the treatment condition and a higher accuracy score in the control condition seem at odds: If treated subjects tend to expect the displayed information to be less accurate than in the other condition, it is difficult to speculate why they should simultaneously laud the high usefulness of the label information. The reverse might have been more plausible, with treated participants judging the displayed information to be more accurate but not necessarily more useful. In this constellation these observations seem at odds with the theoretical expectations. Due to the statistical significance on the one hand and the recorded trends across samples (even if not always statistically significant) on the other hand, this puzzling observation would be a recommended starting point for further analysis. At this stage though it is prudent to reject the working hypothesis.

One further finding bears mentioning: In the samples I SM and II UK, mean values were higher for treated participants for an item that asked subjects to outline if they thought the energy label to be a part of the product marketing material (Q65_2). However, for the sample III DE the reverse was true, with significantly lower values for treated subjects ($M_{\text{treatment}} = 3.75$) than for non-treated subjects ($M_{\text{control}} = 4.68$). Median values were similarly different ($Mdn_{\text{treatment}} = 4$ ($Mdn_{\text{control}} = 5$), an effect that is statistically significant ($p = .035$ using an exact sampling distribution) and powerful enough to invert mean values for the total sample in this direction ($M_{\text{treatment}} = 3.75$, $M_{\text{control}} = 3.82$) – albeit the effect is no longer statistically significant for the total sample. Out of all the tests run for this part of the analysis, this is the second one to confirm a statistically significant difference between conditions in accordance with the hypothesised expectations. Examined on its own, this suggests that non-treated participants in the German sample predominantly took the presented information as marketing material, with the implication that these were designed by or at least voluntarily placed by the manufacturer as common for such material. Treated participants however, visually reminded of the involvement of the EU as a regulatory

actor, here conceded that it was less likely that the EU energy label was included purely for marketing purposes. This is an encouraging observation, especially with the considerable effect size in mind: mean values were almost 25% higher for non-treated subjects.

As with the other statistically significant findings above, judged within the full context of the data caution is advised: there is no clear theoretical expectation for this effect only to be present in the sample III DE, but not in the samples I SM or II UK. Sample III DE is itself the smallest and thus more prone than others to be skewed by outliers. But more importantly, if participants consistently judged the label to be part of the marketing material, one would also expect correspondingly higher (or lower) scores for item Q65_5, where subjects were asked to identify the manufacturers intention to use the label to improve its product's image – or in other words, to employ the label for marketing purposes. However, for this latter item mean values are consistently higher for treated participants, albeit not to a statistically significant degree. With the trend in Q65_5 pointing in the opposite direction, and the statistically significant observation in Q65_2 only present in the smallest sample alone, this finding again was judged insufficient to fully accept the working hypothesis.

Overall, these two cases may warrant further analysis in the future. However, based on the examination of data collected for the five Q65 items we cannot argue that the accuracy of information hypothesis is true. As formulated earlier in this chapter, within the context of the experimental interventions presented in this study it is not possible to say that treated subjects judged information displayed in conjunction with the EU energy label as more accurate.

Items in the second set of measurement were included to gather data on participants' trust in regulatory action, with the individual items of measurement Q67 grouped here to cover different dimensions connected with this variable. As before,

after examination of the data individual items were found to be positively correlated with each other, albeit not strongly enough for a single trust score to be computed for this analysis.

The first two items touch upon a normative component: Based on the theoretical expectations formulated above, participants in the treatment condition were expected to record higher values here. Through normalised familiarity with the EU's function as a regulatory actor, treated subjects were expected to evaluate these regulatory interventions more positively (Q67_1), and also to be more positively predisposed towards regulatory involvement of public institution in the area of consumer protection (Q67_2). A preliminary analysis suggested that this trend is arguably present in the analysed data, with mean values generally higher for participants in the treatment condition. Especially for the first item, $\text{Mean}_{\text{treatment}}$ values were higher both for the total sample as well as for individual samples. However, the differences in means were neither significant in terms of effect size, nor in terms of statistical significance as established with Mann-Whitney U tests. In a similar manner, mean values between conditions were comparably close together on the second item, with differences not being statistically significant either. No clear trend is observable for these two normative items, as a result it is not possible to say if the differences between conditions are not due to chance alone. Within the context of these experimental interventions, treated participants do not express a more positive disposition towards regulatory enforcement or prospective increased regulatory involvement of public actors in consumer protection.

Participants were also asked if they held regulatory action of public actors responsible for an increase in prices, with results expected to be negatively correlated with exposure to the treatment stimuli. Contrary to expectations though scores for both participant groups were very similar, with differences in means almost non-existent (total sample, sample II UK) or slightly skewed in favour of the treatment

condition (sample I SM) or control condition (sample III DE). Mann-Whitney U tests confirmed that the observed differences were not statistically significant. The hypothesised assumption that subjects familiar with the EU's regulatory role and with access to an increased reservoir of trust in the EU's ability to act in their favour would therefore not expect the EU's regulatory action to drive up product prices, i.e. potentially act against the participant's interests. Based on the data gathered in these experimental interventions this hypothesis has to be rejected; no statistically significant link was observed that allows for a different conclusion. It is open to further discussion if the sole reason here is that a theoretical true effect was merely too small in size to be picked up by the present experimental design. In addition, a redesign of this item in particular may be considered useful for any potential further iterations of this experiment, as the relationship between the underlying variables this item was designed to measure for the purpose of the hypothesis may be less straightforward than originally theorised: It is still plausible that participants familiar with – and implicitly favourably predisposed towards – the EU as a regulatory actor will be more inclined towards positive assumptions about the impact of these regulatory actions, i.e. will expect prices not to rise as theorised here. However, as an alternative explanation, subjects might start with the same level of implicit trust in the EU, while still recognising the positive intentions behind these regulatory actions as well as the overall positive outcomes of these actions, they might still evaluate this specific dimension of rising prices as a single dimension of the overall sum of outcomes negatively. I.e., with the current item design it is not possible to further specify if participants do not believe prices will be rising due to regulatory action, or rather if participants do believe prices will be rising but accept this as part of overall positive outcomes of regulatory actions. While there is no pressing need to reiterate on this design at this stage, any further experimental avenues in this direction should be mindful of this issue.

Two remaining items have not been discussed for this part of the analysis: Q67_3 asked participants to record the extent to which they found the energy label confusing. Note that for the purpose of this analysis the values were recoded to be inverted, i.e. higher values correspond to participants signalling they were not confused by the label design. A high familiarity of participants with EU involvement in designing product labels was then assumed to correspond to higher scores on this item for treated participants, with subjects in the control condition showing less familiarity with the changed design. For both the total sample as well as sample II UK and sample III DE mean values for treated participants are slightly higher than for their counterparts, but again these differences were not found to be statistically significant. With only a small, statistically not significant effect observed here the data from this item cannot be used to confirm the working hypothesis. This is a further item that may be considered to be reworked in future iterations: where participants in both treatment and control condition are expected to have largely identical levels of familiarity with the use of the original label in natura, the small differences between the visual stimuli in the two conditions might simply not be large enough to elicit a powerful effect for this item.

A last trust item was included to record a 'trust in good performance' score, where participants could express whether or not they trusted regulatory actors to reliably guarantee the veracity of information included in the energy label (Q67_5). The hypothesis, expecting treated participants to express higher levels of trust in public actors' regulatory work, could not be confirmed based on the available data. Contrary to expectations mean values were higher for participants in the control condition across all individual samples as well as the total one, although these differences were confirmed to be not statistically significant in Mann-Whitney U tests. Despite this, the trend in favour of higher values in the control condition is notable, both because within the context of this analysis it is one of the clearer trends, and because it runs contrary to the hypothesised assumption: In this scenario, exposure

to the EU energy symbol saw subjects express lower values of trust in public institutions. However, just like results cited above that could be used to tentatively confirm effects in accordance with the underlying hypotheses, the results of this item should be viewed with caution: with no large or statistically significant effect to speak of, we cannot assume that exposure to the EU label decreases people's trust in public actors. Within the parameters set for this analysis though based on the results presented here it is also not possible to confirm the working hypothesis corresponding to this measurement of participant's trust in public regulatory action (Q67).

This concludes the discussion of results for the information reliability measurements. Both hypotheses formulated above cannot be confirmed based on the data gathered in these experimental interventions. For this part of the analysis a total of 40 Whitney-Mann U tests were run in conjunction in order to ascertain whether observed differences between control and treatment conditions were statistically significant: for 2x5 items across three individual and one aggregate samples. No patterns were found to consistently show trends according to the hypothesised expectations; only three tests showed statistically significant differences between conditions, but only two of them actually ran in the expected direction, with results from one 'accuracy' item seemingly at odds with the results from one 'usefulness' item. In addition, the sheer number of tests run highlights a theoretical risk of alpha error accumulation – the concern is theoretical though because ultimately the number of statistically significant results remained small. Based on the analysis presented above the original hypotheses have to be rejected; within the context of the experimental interventions presented here participants were not found to judge information to be more accurate or more trustworthy after being exposed to the EU energy label. The potential merits of these results – and the underlying experimental design itself – will be further discussed in the following final review chapter.

6. Conclusions

This thesis explored the relationship between the exposure of participants to banal visual triggers and the meaning people associate with the EU. Based on a review of objectives of current research approaches into EU attitudes and suitable comparable experimental approaches, a novel set of experimental interventions was designed and its implementation presented. To this purpose, the 'EU Energy Label' was employed as a functional cue to gain insights into the extent to which the EU symbol enhances perceptions of credibility and trust. Testing this approach in three different experimental interventions, empirical data was subsequently gathered and discussed.

Participants in the sequence of interventions did not respond as expected to being exposed to these visual cues: Subjects did not come to view the product presented with an EU symbol in a virtual purchasing scenario as more favourable, nor did they express higher trust in the information presented with the EU energy label or in the regulatory intervention this label stands for. The original expectation was that people's familiarity with the EU as an actor involved in consumer protection through mediated regulatory action would come with a measured reservoir of implicit trust that could in turn be triggered in these interventions. However, user scores did not consistently or significantly change after being exposed to the stimuli, thus making it impossible to confirm that this link can be reliably triggered within the prepared experimental context. As such, the original hypotheses could not be confirmed. At this stage it is important to review these findings.

The objective of this thesis was two-fold: First, increase our knowledge of the meaning of the European Union to the wider public, specifically of how relevant implicit attachment to the EU is within the realm of banal everyday interactions; second, to develop a new experimental approach that can contribute to the growth of

the field of experimental political science and provide additional tools in the academic endeavour to examine public attitudes and experiences within the context of our field of study.

As to the first goal, preliminary results here clearly showed that the original assumptions could not be verified. It is important to recognise that even while the primary goal of this study was not to report negative results, negative knowledge accumulation still contributed to our overall understanding of the subject matter. In this case, knowing that the intended effect size was overestimated and could not be captured with the current design may not be the type of result that was hoped for when setting out in designing this study. In the spirit of academic accumulation of knowledge, however, there are still insights to be gained from these findings. In a Popperian sense, the results presented in this study are a very context-specific but firm contribution to academic knowledge. Within the context of the experimental setup presented here, the link between measures of trust and implicit attachment to the EU does not exist, or is not as strong, as theorised.

The European Union, oftencited as the ever-changing union, has come a long way since the treaty of Maastricht, and not all changes notable to the casual observer pertain to the realm of high politics and Spitzenkandidaten only. We can make a good case for the expansion of the EU's influence as a regulatory actor, both through direct measures enacted by its associated institutions as well as through indirect legislative means, in turn left to be operationalised by member states. Either way, the salience of these interventions and with it the visibility of the associated outcomes in the EU member states has been growing measurably. This study attempted to focus specifically on the more banal arena of expression of this growing influence. Assuming a public reaction to an actor's growing influence in a specific aspect of public life is a reasonable starting assumption – one way to interpret the findings of this study is that the effect of this hypothesized reaction was simply not as strong as

anticipated. Participants were expected to come into the experiment having already built a measure of trust in the EU as a regulatory actor by virtue of previous exposure to associated signifiers in everyday interactions. This exposure effect was theorised to be cumulative: Every time someone encounters these markers in everyday life, be it on the street or in a virtual context, be it through prepared marketing material or through organic conversations or other social interactions, this exposure is assumed to be increasingly normalised. As people move from accepting to expecting an actor's regulatory presence, they can come to rely on this service – in the field of customer protection, a symbolic guarantee of an object's quality in the form of a label. This assumed reservoir of implicit trust in the EU as a regulatory actor was the starting point for the experimental approach presented here; the negative results suggest that the strength of this effect were overestimated: Even though normalised in its banal presence, based on the results gathered this level of implicit attachment is simply not a sufficiently effective basis to measurably change people's outlook on, in this case, fridges. People may increasingly accept the EU's regulatory involvement as a normal part of the modern consumerist reality – but in the same vein people simply do not care enough about this function as a guarantor of quality to measurably impact their judgement.

It may well be that biases intrinsic to the field of EU studies – expecting the EU to be an impactful, or at least notable actor – have also played a role in designing this study. Experience tells us that it is possible to overestimate the importance of effects and actors key to our own work, only then to find that they ultimately prove to be less relevant to the wider electorate. In an ideal scenario for these experiments even participants consciously identifying as Euro-sceptic would have responded positively to seeing their reservoir of implicit attachment primed. The notion that if measurable outcomes of the EU's successful regulatory activity find an increasing presence in everyday life, so will the wider public's levels of attachment to the EU see a measurable increase, may have been informed by these biases.

The original assumptions and working hypotheses are still reasonable as starting points for this study. If people see an independent actor as a trustworthy guarantor of regulatory standards by virtue of possessing both the capability as well as interests to act on these, then this involvement should convey measurable meaning where relevant. The EU as an actor known for its regulatory involvement could reasonably be assumed to fulfil such a function. Nonetheless, what the results showed is that, simply put, for participants in this study the role of the EU was less important than expected. Beyond the immediate field of consumer protection this is a point that resonates well with other public attitudes research – and certainly with current political developments.

Failure to record an implicit attachment effect due to overestimating the effect size is one interpretation for the results presented in this study. A second consideration is one of methodological nature: The second objective of this study was to develop a new experimental approach that could contribute to experimental political science by providing an additional, alternative method to facilitate examination of how the public relates to the EU. Complementing existing research approaches both in the qualitative and especially in the quantitative tradition, this study presents an innovative way of tackling a core research puzzle: how can we more reliably approximate what people are really thinking – in this case about the institutional actor EU. This is explicitly not to suggest that established research traditions should be abandoned in favour of experimental designs, but rather to show how incorporating elements from experimental approaches to the European studies toolkit can be a worthwhile endeavour. In this view, despite lack of statistically significant results this study can still inform future experimental designs. Incorporating established measures of market research into online-based experiments, the data gathered in this manner can still serve to provide nuanced empirical data on the issue of people's implicit attachment to the EU. Further review though is necessary on the

extent to which the individual measures chosen and the design or implementation of the individual interventions needs refinement.

One possible avenue for improvement is here to rethink how the visual stimuli were employed in the experiment: An included variable for the timed exposure of participants to the flag stimuli could easily be put to better use. Longer exposure would be a practical way to further increase visibility of the stimuli; a redesign of the images used is then the next obvious step for a potential future iteration: The design would benefit from larger visual stimuli, where the trigger is more than just embedded as a comparatively small label on the side of a virtual fridge door. Where manageable and accessible, other media formats may also be viable ways of including EU stimuli. At the very least though, an explicit confirmation that a specific stimulus has been seen by participants should be included.

When considering updating this study's design for the use in future research projects, some of the key drawbacks need to be mentioned again: As with all studies building on experimental designs, it is important to point out that concerns as to external validity and generalizability fully apply to this project (Kittel and Morton 2012). This concern can be addressed partially by using stimuli adapted from real-world examples, as was done here: the more familiar participants are with the visual stimuli, the easier it is to draw conclusions for a context not strictly limited to the laboratory conditions. Nonetheless, the design clearly remains an artificial one. Accordingly, results from this study cannot be generalised to the wider public, even less so where it is based on a geographically homogeneous self-selected student sample such as here. The obvious downsides of relying on a student sample have been widely reported on (Bruter 2009; Sears 1986), with both greater demographic as well as geographic heterogeneity of the sample as objectives for future iterations of the experiment. However, while this structural constraint precludes from making

claims as to the generalizability of any results, at the same time a homogeneous sample aids in controlling for any potentially confounding variables.

There is another practical concern inherent in choosing a student sample that has been mentioned in the previous chapters: Although it is likely that student participants are familiar both with product safety and efficiency regulatory structures on a general level and a variety of purchasing experiences, it is possible that a sizeable number of subjects will not have purchased new white goods appliances for their own personal use, simply due to common financial and living conditions that are to be assumed for this age group. Future iterations would preferably focus on a more mature sample demographic with more purchasing power – or else focus the object of experimentation on cues more immediately relevant to the student experience. A further avenue to better contextualise the insights gained from this experiment could seek to replicate these findings with modified visual cues, dividing a comparable student sample to being exposed not only to the EU flag design and the no-flag control, but also a third treatment based on a design that includes their respective national flags. This can help to ensure that any effects are not merely driven by the exposure to any random flag but by the specific EU symbol, and open further avenues for comparisons between national samples. This possible change should only be implemented for an improved design where a measurable effect has been verified in a test pilot. Accordingly, a higher priority should be to improve on this study by employing a larger sample with more purchasing power.

Despite being unable to confirm the hypotheses formulated in the beginning of this study, it is worthwhile to continue working on improving stimuli-based experimental designs. The methodology here builds on a growing body of research on non-conscious exposure to visual primes and political attitudes. For this field of research, and in particular for a topic that can be as divisive as EU politics, researchers have long since recognised that considerable amounts of creativeness

and inventive rigor are necessary when it comes to accurately examining the formation and spread of public attitudes. In other words, people do not always wear their hearts on their sleeves – particularly when it comes to subjects that can be as divisive as EU politics. Quantitative designs specifically in the area of EU studies have seen substantive and successful improvements in the past decades, in part by addressing improved measures of latent variables or by including proxy analyses, both valuable areas to focus on when it comes to examining connections that go beyond the scope of explicit self-reported measurements. Experimental designs as presented here enrich this debate and further our understanding of what drives subjects' levels of trust in – or people's disenchantment with – political institutions. While both the concrete topical focus chosen for this study and the design of the individual measurements picked for the interventions need further improvement, it would be premature to dismiss the possibility of contributing to the field of EU studies with stimuli-based research. As such, it was one of the contributions of this thesis to show where established research avenues can be meaningfully complemented by experimental approaches: tapping into methodological blind-spots, experiments in political science can provide useful insights into uncovering latent or unconsciously held beliefs. In particular the phenomenon of banal Europeanism, with the prospect to contribute to the formation of EU attachment on a mundane level, is a key area of interest where more overt, explicit modes of identification are set to be contentious where EU politics becomes an increasingly divisive field.

As participants did not show themselves to be significantly more trusting of EU-backed information, or more positively disposed towards specific products when treated with an EU cue, careful review of this experimental design is appropriate. A low level of implicit attachment to the EU within this experimental context raises questions as to the explanatory power of banal Europeanism, even if it fits well though with current observed public disenchantment with the EU. In fact, it is precisely due to the changing public context that a good case for further iterations in

this direction can be made. Specifically for but not limited to the UK context, the results of the Brexit referendum have had grave implications for the relationship between the wider electorate, the EU, and national governments. For the practical completion of this study the referendum results were certainly more than just an inconvenient new development, almost bringing this project to a halt.

More importantly and slightly counter-intuitively though, now may be an ideal time to follow up on this study: Public opinion on the EU is becoming more polarised in the wake of the referendum, and explicit evaluations of the EU are more salient in UK discourse now than they have been in a long time. The lack of effect size registered in the current experimental design can arguably be explained by the fact that the EU was simply not that relevant to people, despite increased normalisation of banal visual cues of the EU's involvement in everyday life. Independent of the presence of EU energy labels on kitchen white goods, this abstract political actor was simply not at the forefront of people's minds. Even when primed accordingly, the participants' reactions were not strong, the EU living up to its image of a polity far removed from people's everyday reality.

However, with the recent changes in the political climate, in particular how controversial the future relationship of the UK with the EU is being discussed in public at the moment, the EU has certainly taken new levels of prominence in people's minds. What is more, as the UK prepares to exit the single market, consumer protection issues are among those issues rising to the foreground: On the one hand Eurosceptics welcome the idea of buying products unencumbered by restrictive EU regulation again, while on the other side of the aisle people are articulating their worries about stepping away from the consumer protection umbrella of the EU. With the salience of the impact of the EU and EU regulation on daily life sharply increasing in the wake of the Brexit referendum and article 50 negotiations, this changing context offers crucial opportunities to further examine the empirical footing of theories

of banal Europeanism. Rerunning a series of similar experimental interventions at this point in time, outwith the intrinsic chances that such a unique political development offers for data gathering, would struggle less with the lack of salience of the EU in people's minds and could thus circumnavigate some of the issues detailed in this study.

It is for this reason that the author considers further iterations of this or similar experimental designs as a worthwhile endeavour. The practical and methodological considerations for how best to improve this design presented above are both logical and necessary steps for as of yet, the research puzzle at the heart of it all remains unsolved: For the case of the European Union, and supranational political institutions in general, just how powerful can the realm of the banal be when it comes to strengthening or forming public attachment – and ultimately identity?

In the light of the evidence presented here it is all too easy to answer that question with a negative: there is no explanatory power, banal Europeanism viewed with respect to the evidence produced here is a theory without much empirical ground to stand on. If a contribution of negative knowledge is to be taken seriously, it would be intellectually dishonest not to question the extent to which core tenets of banal Europeanism can find empirical verification as suggested here. After all, even if highly context-specific, the association theorised here could not be substantiated with empirical evidence – and a small number of spurious results even suggest that the links explored here may run opposite to the theorised direction of explanation, with normalisation of banal EU symbols suited to decrease positive evaluations within specific contexts. In light of this it bears asking to what extent the evidence presented in this study does not serve as a threat to the theoretical underpinnings of banal Europeanism. In essence, why look for the potential of creating a European identity from these banal contexts if the evidence does not support such hopes? While fair and crucial questions, it may be too early to put the theoretical work on banal

Europeanism to the grave quite yet. This study can by virtue of its scope present only a small empirical piece to a larger theoretical puzzle. This increase in negative evidence informs our knowledge of a particular dimension of the concept of banal Europeanism that was found less pervasive as originally thought. At the same time, both work examining the power of the banal in national contexts as originally conceived of by Billig, as well as contributions specifically examining banal Europeanism and its potential to create popular attachment to the EU, have still shown the robust applicability of this approach. In light of this it seems overly rash to discard the whole theoretical framework before we better understand how these individual pieces of this research puzzle fit together. More research is needed to either fully outline why key assumptions underpinning banal Europeanism is flawed – or to identify the areas and contexts where people are affected by banal signifiers as expected.

This is then where the modest results of this study can inform this puzzle: Admittedly, the sample tested in this study did not behave in line with the expectations formed on the basis of these other contributions – as discussed above, both the type of sample as well as of the specific experimental intervention chosen in combination played a part in this. Key takeaway from this study are then precisely these factors as limits of the concept of banal Europeanism. Viewed in conjunction with other empirical research that tests the power of banal signifiers, this can allow us to fully appreciate just how readily applicable Billig's observations are for public attachment formation in the context of the European Union. This study specifically helps to outline the boundaries of the explanatory power of this concept, illustrating specific contextual conditions where banal Europeanism ceases to be relevant for our understanding of EU identity formation.

Providing an example for a set of experimental conditions where the expected power of the banal frustrates theoretical expectations can accordingly help to refocus

academic attention to modified conditions where verifiability is more likely. In light of the evidence presented here, any follow-up investigation of the empirical foundations of this approach must proceed with renewed healthy scepticism that allows for further falsification of this approach. Successful implementation of this experimental approach in future iterations is not a foregone conclusion. The usefulness of the concept of banal Europeanism will have to be weighed anew with every new empirical contribution.

At the same time, as a discipline this improved understanding of the limits of the applicability of this concept should not prematurely lead us to reject the theory as such. Changes to the salience specifically of the practical implications of EU membership in the public debate, and a better understanding of the practical requirements for the design of experimental tests will be key factors that can make further examination of the concept of banal Europeanism more successful. To what extent the changing public debate on EU membership and its benefits on the one hand, and perceptions of threatened loss of these benefits specifically, will meaningfully change the outcome of these experiments will be a crucial question any further investigation into the power of banal signifiers will need to address. Key assumptions on how to implement these examinations can be kept from this study, but greater care need be taken on monitoring salience of the EU as an agent as perceived by participants both before and during the experimental interventions. In this way, any future extensions of this study can engage in this core academic practice of gathering more evidence, until we can more clearly confirm – or reject – the practical implications of banal Europeanism as a driver of EU identification and attachment.

This study took great care not to speak to the formation of EU identities in greater detail, even though the review of the literature and the design of early prototype iterations of the experimental interventions set EU identification – rather

than public attachment to the EU – as the original focal point of this thesis. Just as banal Europeanism seeks to find a theoretical explanation for how identification with a supra-national polity can be formed without the prior public attachment born out of historical practice, the study originally hoped to provide plausible empirical evidence for this approach. Narrowing down the scope of the experiments presented here was quickly identified as a prudent step to successfully implement this research, and with the modified experimental designs focussed on public attachment formation this is accordingly only what this study can provide evidence on.

As outlined above, there is ample space to extend upon the methodological framework presented here in order to more rigorously investigate the boundaries of banal Europeanism in practice. This should not merely allow for new evidence examined in this way to speak to the formation of public attachment, but ideally the formation of EU identities as well. As a crude but not completely inaccurate approximation, the formation of attachment is here seen as a precursor to the formation of identification: where a wider public finds itself attached to a polity through normalisation of its banal symbols in everyday life, this attachment can extend into – and should be examined as to its potential to grow into – fully fledged identification with the EU.

Providing empirical contributions from a neo-positivist frame of reference to a concept as diffuse as identity will always be a challenge, even more so when the nature of the integration project itself is contested both politically and academically. At the same time, when approached with the necessary rigour it is precisely the size of this challenge that can make further investigation here so worthwhile: Extension of the framework presented here then has the potential not just to contribute to the academic literature on banal Europeanism, but beyond that provide much-needed input to the wider debate on EU identification. In times of populism and political disintegration, it is with uneasy certainty that the debate on EU identity increasingly

settles on findings where tacit identification with the EU is found too brittle when under stress – or increasingly replaced by open hostility to begin with. Independent if found to be a form of attachment routinely outmatched by other political exigencies, or found to be incompatible with national- or regional-level attachments, Duchesne's assertion that academics routinely overestimate the power of EU identification is increasingly finding credence – and rightfully so. EU identification seen in this light is increasingly ceasing to be of relevance when examining public political behaviour.

Precisely this was one of the motivating starting points for this thesis: the hope here was to be able to introduce new empirical data on public attachment to and ultimately identification with the EU that could help to emphasise the importance of additional low-conscious facets of these complex concepts – and thereby potentially help to show EU identities in a new light. For example, an admittedly highly theoretical scenario could see participants who self-identify as firmly Eurosceptic still score high on the EU identification instruments as defined here. Being able to provide empirical evidence for a dichotomy like this – evidence for a stronger than anticipated pervasiveness of EU identification indicators – would certainly be a contribution that could meaningfully inform the wider debate on EU identities. It is only prudent to stress again that evidence of this kind is as of yet elusive – and in light of the findings of this study arguably even more unlikely to be found now. All further investigative steps in this direction must be mindful of not overstating what experimental designs can and cannot add here. Nonetheless, being able to better understand the banal aspects of EU identification is a worthwhile endeavour that has the potential to meaningfully enhance our discipline's ability to review the integration project's tenacity vis-à-vis its current and future challenges.

Crucial for this study's contribution here was the concept of trust, specifically by employing a definition derived from an interest-driven interpersonal view of trust. Highly interrelated with issues of legitimacy, attachment and political identification,

accounts of the lacking pervasiveness of EU identification often find themselves mirrored in similar accounts of declining political trust throughout the union. The EU here is by far not the only polity this is true for, but reviews of the integration project will also have to take low public identification, persistent perceived legitimacy issues, and the issue of declining political trust into consideration in conjunction. There is thus much to be gained from a more structured examination of the state of institutional trust in the EU, for a not dissimilar reason that makes the concept of identification so relevant: As publics increasingly seem to turn away from established institutions, interpreting these changes as a function of declining trust becomes an increasingly credible explanation. Fortunately a large and established body of literature on political and institutional trust exists already, even though marked conceptual differences at times make comparative summaries of existing contributions a challenge. Where our discipline is concerned with the examination of the robustness and effectiveness of the institutions that define our democratic societies today, improving our understanding of how and where the concept of trust can be a useful focal lens to this purpose will remain a key challenge for the immediate future. Access to novel empirical data can here improve our knowledge of the ways in which institutional trust can develop or erode, and in turn how these rising or falling levels of trust contribute to the development or erosion of public attachment to polities. The evidence for a link between institutional trust and attachment in this study did not prove compelling, but the potential for interdependence of these two concepts need still be considered to identify where these factors are relevant motivators for citizen behaviour.

All in all the role of culture, trust, and identity will continue to feature prominently in the examination of political authority formation and deterioration as we observe the mass politicisation of EU politics. Where these newly politicised issues cease to be of low salience for the relevant publics, the function and effect of trust is set to shift considerably. As deteriorating levels of trust can be seen as an expression

of growing discontent with the social foundations of the European integration project itself, the framework introduced in this study was an attempt to contribute to our disciplines ability to speak to this crucial question. The empirical examination of how and where trust affects banal interactions of citizens can provide insights that run the risk of being otherwise easily overlooked –nonetheless they still have the potential of being relevant for the integration project itself. Understanding the power of political symbols and the importance of banal triggers will remain a key piece of a socio-political puzzle that now begs for answers. With the redefinition of the relationship between EU and UK that is now in full force, naturally a redefinition of meaning of the EU's symbols and their display in daily life will go hand in hand. While some of the findings of this study may thus lose their frame for immediate applicability, it is clear that neither will EU institutions themselves disappear, nor so will the need for political institutions in the UK or other national contexts to reliably convey meaning and instil trust – in times of crisis and marked political change more so than ever. Accompanying these processes in a methodologically rigorous manner will remain one of the demands set out for those active in political studies. Knowledge about the links between institutional trust, banal symbols and their associated meanings will thus retain their significance for and beyond academia in this process of re-imagination that the coming years will see. It is my hope that this contribution will find its useful place here.

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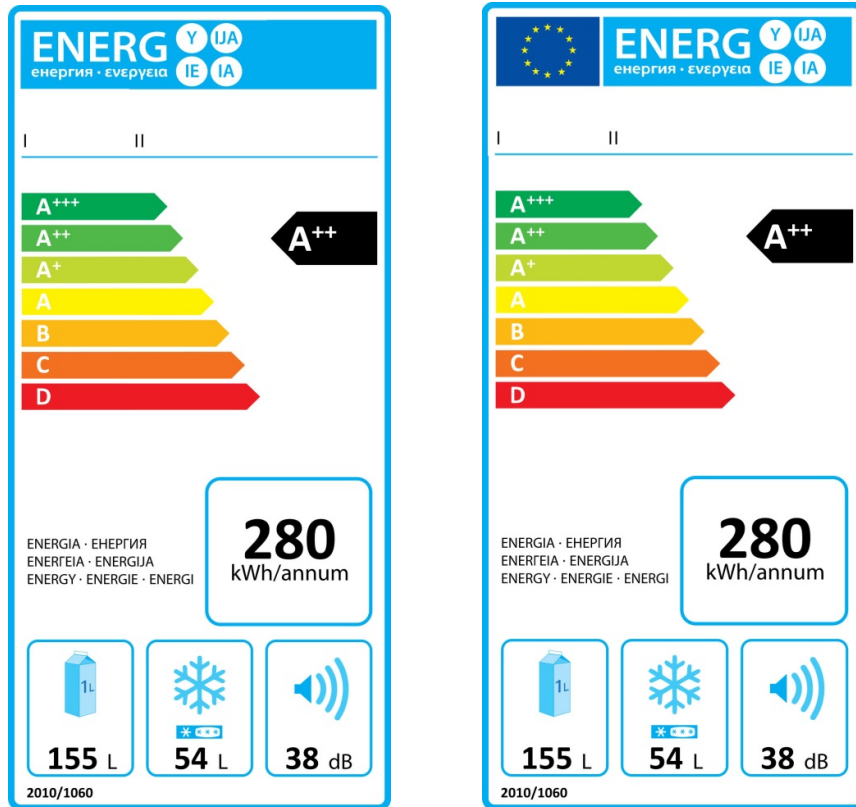
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Appendix A.: Experimental Design – Functional Visual Stimuli



- A. EU Energy label mockup designs for use in the experiment as functional triggers, with the modified (control – A1) stimulus on the left and the original (treatment A2) stimulus on the right.

Appendix B1.: Experimental Design – Questionnaire (English)

Note: This version of the questionnaire is exported from the Qualtrics software package, showing the design employed in the second experimental intervention (UK sample). The formatting has been adapted to better suit a print format. Timing measurements that were neither visible to participants nor used in the final analysis have been removed. All of these layout changes are marked throughout this survey by annotations. Note that not all of the following questions were displayed to participants. For more information, please see Appendix B3. Measurement Display Logic.

Flags And Fridges - Studentsample - English & German

Q2 Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in this study.

You will be asked to answer several questions about common household appliances and their energy consumption, and a few demographic and attitude questions about yourself so that we can put your responses in context. Not all participants will evaluate the same information. This survey will take a maximum of 10-15 minutes to complete. Please answer each question following the instructions on the screen.

At the end of the survey, you can enter a prize draw of 1 x £50 Amazon voucher that will be raffled among all participants who complete this survey. Please note that you are free to discontinue at any moment, but only completed surveys will be eligible for the voucher.

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions - please respond with your honest opinions. All the answers you provide will be treated confidentially; they will not be used to sell or market any products or services to you. Your data will not be published in any individually identifiable form. For more information see below.

By clicking start you acknowledge that you have read and agree with the terms detailed here. If you require assistance at any time during the survey, or would like to contact us, please email philipp.heinrich@ed.ac.uk.

Please select 'start' to begin your survey.

See additional Information

Note: Above link highlights below segment

Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than the researchers listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your academic status, mark or standing with the university. If you desire to withdraw, please close your internet browser.

Questions about the Research

This survey is part of ongoing PhD-level research at the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh, UK. If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact the principal investigator, Philipp Heinrich, at philipp.heinrich@ed.ac.uk.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact his supervisor Prof Laura Cram at laura.cram@ed.ac.uk.

Q4 We would like to know more about what matters to consumers when buying white goods such as refrigerators. Please look carefully at the photos presented on the following page and answer a few questions about how you view the product you see there.

Q59 Please look closely at the picture below.



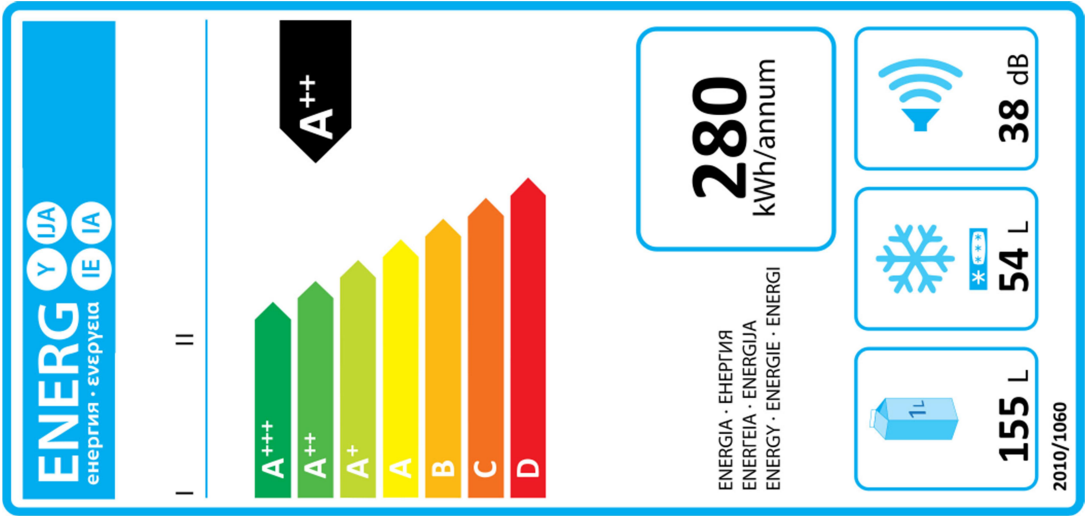
Q60 Please look closely at the picture below.



Q63 The following picture shows the energy efficiency label visible before in more detail.

| Note: Picture size reduced.

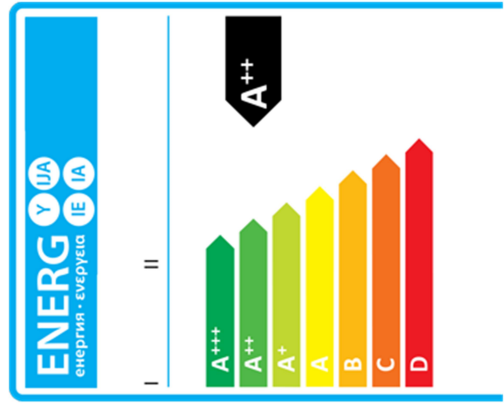
Q57



Q22 Please give your overall feelings or impressions toward using this model of fridge:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unsatisfactory:Satisfactory (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awful:Nice (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpleasant:Pleasant (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unsafe:Safe (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Common:Distinctive (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattractive:Attractive (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useless:Useful (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low Quality:High Quality (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q58



Q23 How would you judge what the product does for you?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Impractical:Practical (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnecessary:Necessary (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Functional:Functional (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Sensible:Sensible (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unhelpful:Helpful (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inefficient:Efficient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harmful:Beneficial (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Handy:Handy (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Problem Solving:Problem Solving (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffective:Effective (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q25 Regarding the product design, would you say you ...

- ☐ ...like it a lot (1)
- ☐ ...like it a little (2)
- ☐ ...don't really like it (3)
- ☐ ...don't like it at all (4)
- ☐ ...don't know (5)

Q28 What is the most you would be willing to pay for the model in the image?

- ☐ Below £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ more than £2000 (6)

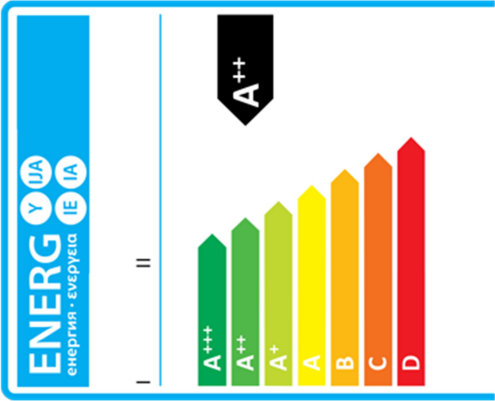
Q29 What would you expect the retail price for this model to be?

- ☐ Below £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ more than £2000 (6)

Q30 If you were to buy a fridge freezer now, would this model be one you would consider?

- ☐ The only model I would consider (1)
- ☐ It would probably be my first choice, but I might consider others (2)
- ☐ One I'd be happy to consider but wouldn't necessarily choose (3)
- ☐ I'd only consider it if I had to or if there was very little choice (4)
- ☐ I probably wouldn't consider it (5)

Q59



Q82 Please give your overall feelings or impressions toward using this model of fridge:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unsatisfactory:Satisfactory (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awful:Nice (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpleasant:Pleasant (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unsafe:Safe (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Common:Distinctive (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattractive:Attractive (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useless:Useful (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low Quality:High Quality (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q60



Q83 How would you judge what the product does for you?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Impractical:Practical (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnecessary:Necessary (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Functional:Functional (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Sensible:Sensible (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unhelpful:Helpful (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inefficient:Efficient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harmful:Beneficial (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Handy:Handy (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Problem Solving:Problem Solving (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffective:Effective (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q84 Regarding the product design, would you say you ...

- ☐ ...like it a lot (1)
- ☐ ...like it a little (2)
- ☐ ...don't really like it (3)
- ☐ ...don't like it at all (4)
- ☐ ...don't know (5)

Q85 What is the most you would be willing to pay for the model in the image?

- ☐ Below €100 (1)
- ☐ €100-£249 (2)
- ☐ €250-£499 (3)
- ☐ €500-£999 (4)
- ☐ €1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ more than €2000 (6)

Q86 What would you expect the retail price for this model to be?

- ☐ Below €100 (1)
- ☐ €100-€249 (2)
- ☐ €250-€499 (3)
- ☐ €500-€999 (4)
- ☐ €1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ more than €2000 (6)

Q87 If you were to buy a fridge freezer now, would this model be one you would consider?

- ☐ The only model I would consider (1)
- ☐ It would probably be my first choice, but I might consider others (2)
- ☐ One I'd be happy to consider but wouldn't necessarily choose (3)
- ☐ I'd only consider it if I had to or if there was very little choice (4)
- ☐ I probably wouldn't consider it (5)

Q9 Please look closely at the picture below.



| Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q15 Please look closely at the picture below.

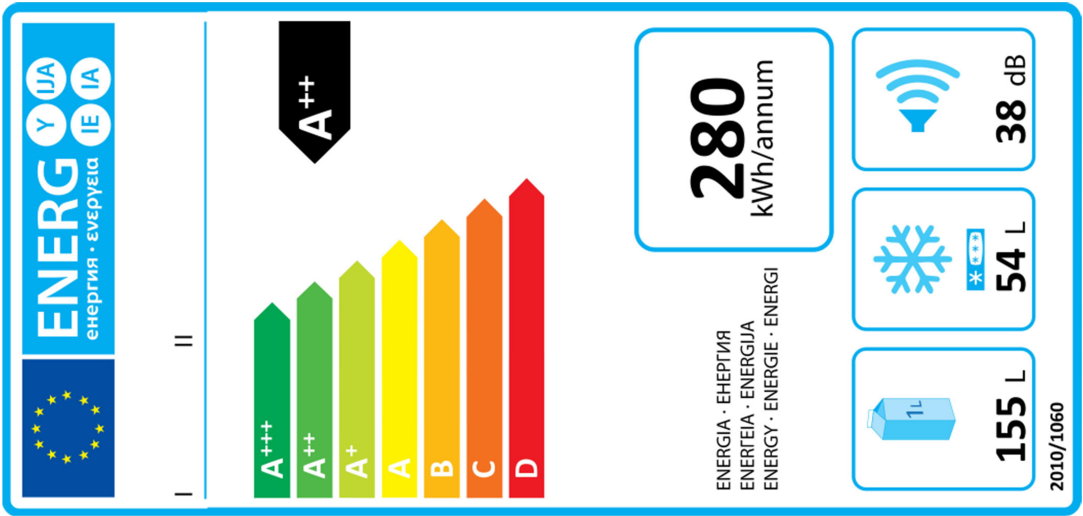
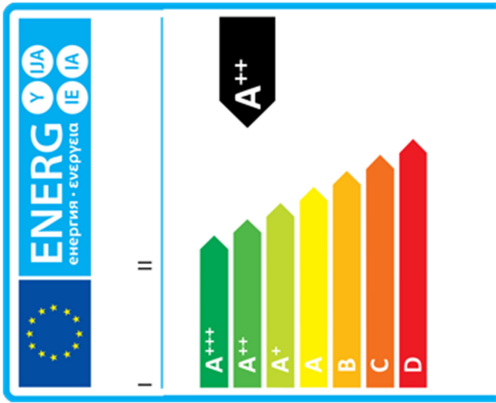


Note: Timing Measurement removed
Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q10 The following picture shows the energy efficiency label visible before in more detail.

Note: Reduced image size

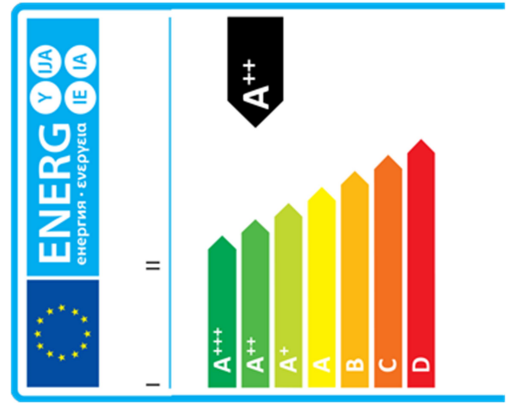
Q103



Q104 Please give your overall feelings or impressions toward using this model of fridge:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unsatisfactory:Satisfactory (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awful:Nice (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpleasant:Pleasant (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unsafe:Safe (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Common:Distinctive (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattractive:Attractive (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useless:Useful (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low Quality:High Quality (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q105



Q106 How would you judge what the product does for you?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Impractical:Practical (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnecessary:Necessary (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Functional:Functional (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Sensible:Sensible (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unhelpful:Helpful (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inefficient:Efficient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harmful:Beneficial (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Handy:Handy (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Problem Solving:Problem Solving (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffective:Effective (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q107 Regarding the product design, would you say you ...

- ☐ ...like it a lot (1)
- ☐ ...like it a little (2)
- ☐ ...don't really like it (3)
- ☐ ...don't like it at all (4)
- ☐ ...don't know (5)

Q108 What is the most you would be willing to pay for the model in the image?

- ☐ Below £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ more than £2000 (6)

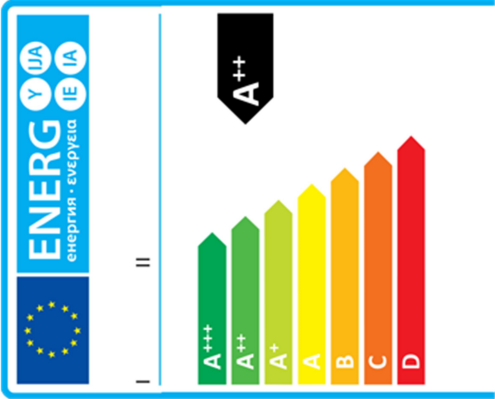
Q109 What would you expect the retail price for this model to be?

- ☐ Below £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ more than £2000 (6)

Q110 If you were to buy a fridge freezer now, would this model be one you would consider?

- ☐ The only model I would consider (1)
- ☐ It would probably be my first choice, but I might consider others (2)
- ☐ One I'd be happy to consider but wouldn't necessarily choose (3)
- ☐ I'd only consider it if I had to or if there was very little choice (4)
- ☐ I probably wouldn't consider it (5)

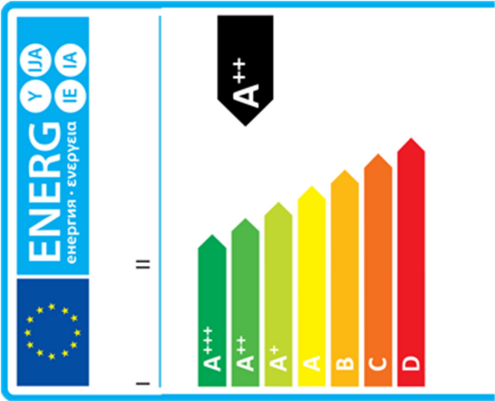
Q111



Q112 Please give your overall feelings or impressions toward using this model of fridge:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unsatisfactory:Satisfactory (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awful:Nice (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpleasant:Pleasant (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unsafe:Safe (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Common:Distinctive (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattractive:Attractive (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useless:Useful (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low Quality:High Quality (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q113



Q114 How would you judge what the product does for you?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Impractical:Practical (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnecessary:Necessary (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Functional:Functional (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Sensible:Sensible (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unhelpful:Helpful (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inefficient:Efficient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harmful:Beneficial (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Handy:Handy (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not Problem Solving:Problem Solving (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffective:Effective (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q115 Regarding the product design, would you say you ...

- ☐ ...like it a lot (1)
- ☐ ...like it a little (2)
- ☐ ...don't really like it (3)
- ☐ ...don't like it at all (4)
- ☐ ...don't know (5)

Q116 What is the most you would be willing to pay for the model in the image?

- ☐ Below €100 (1)
- ☐ €100–€249 (2)
- ☐ €250–€499 (3)
- ☐ €500–€999 (4)
- ☐ €1000–€1999 (5)
- ☐ more than €2000 (6)

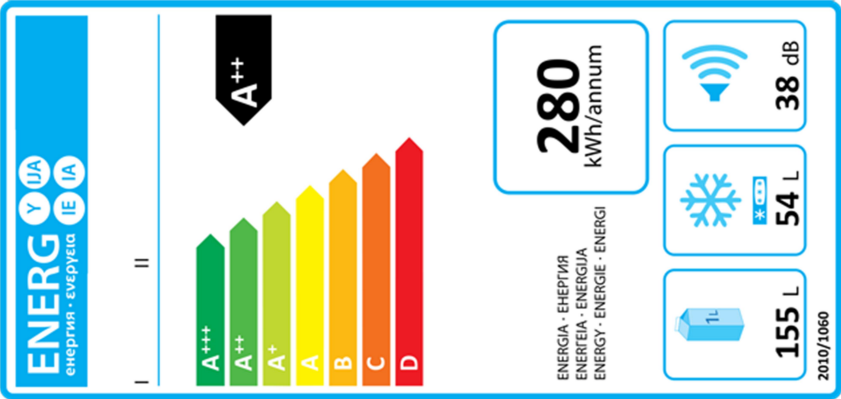
Q117 What would you expect the retail price for this model to be?

- ☐ Below €100 (1)
- ☐ €100-€249 (2)
- ☐ €250-€499 (3)
- ☐ €500-€999 (4)
- ☐ €1000-€1999 (5)
- ☐ more than €2000 (6)

Q118 If you were to buy a fridge freezer now, would this model be one you would consider?

- ☐ The only model I would consider (1)
- ☐ It would probably be my first choice, but I might consider others (2)
- ☐ One I'd be happy to consider but wouldn't necessarily choose (3)
- ☐ I'd only consider it if I had to or if there was very little choice (4)
- ☐ I probably wouldn't consider it (5)

Q64 Before going on, here is the product label again that gives details on the energy efficiency of the product above.

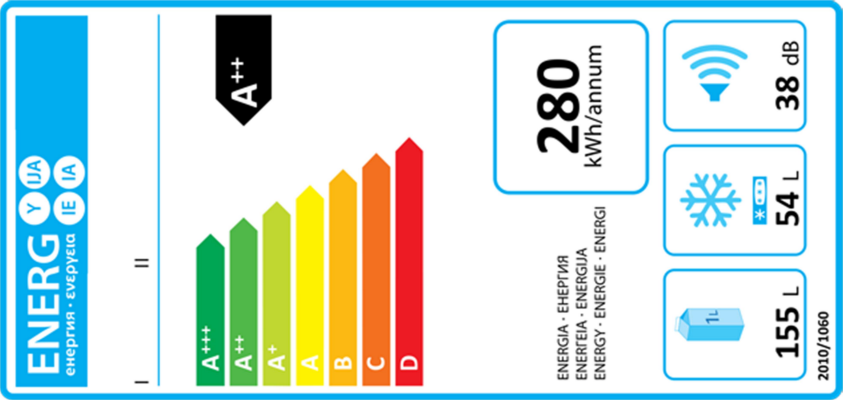


Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q65 Based on the above information, would you agree or disagree with the following statements:¹

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
The energy consumption label is useful to me. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This label is part of the product marketing. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would buy this product over competing products without the label. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is likely that manufacturers use this label to paint a better picture of their product. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect the information on energy consumption on this label to be accurate. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q66 Please have a look at the energy label again before answering the following question.



Note: Timing Measurement removed

¹ In the first sample, Q65 accidentally included the item "The energy consumption label looks very confusing to me." The same item also appears in Q67 in identical form, and was thus omitted from Q65 in the second and third sample.

Q67 The manufacturer is required by law to display the product label you saw on the previous page. Knowing that, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I think it is good that manufacturers have to provide this data. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public institutions should be more involved in consumer protection. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The energy consumption label looks very confusing to me. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulation like this drives prices up for consumers. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust public institutions to do a good job controlling that the data on the label is accurate. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 Before going on, here is the product label again that gives details on the energy efficiency of the product above.

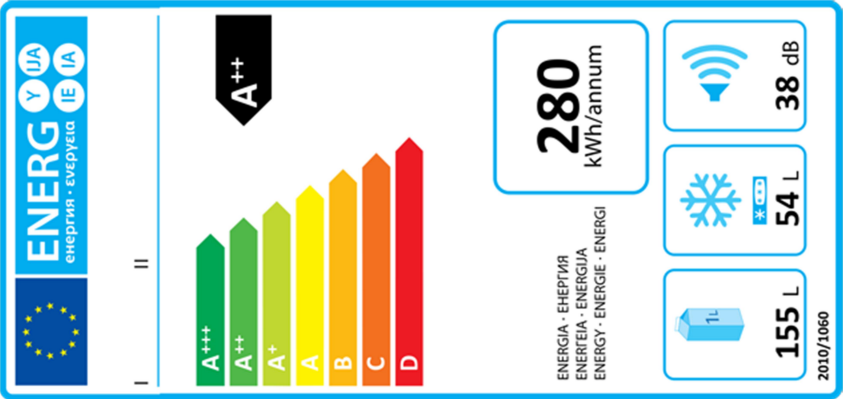


Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q13 Based on the above information, would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
The energy consumption label is useful to me. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This label is part of the product marketing. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The energy consumption label looks very confusing to me. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would buy this product over competing products without the label. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is likely that manufacturers use this label to paint a better picture of their product. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect the information on energy consumption on this label to be accurate. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q35 Please have a look at the energy label again before answering the following question.



Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q36 The manufacturer is required by law to display the product label you saw on the previous page. Knowing that, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I think it is good that manufacturers have to provide this data. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public institutions should be more involved in consumer protection. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The energy consumption label looks very confusing to me. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulation like this drives prices up for consumers. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust public institutions to do a good job controlling that the data on the label is accurate. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q37 To put this information into context, we would like to know more about you and your opinions on the importance of energy efficiency.

Q39 Would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Knowing energy efficiency information is important to me. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is worth spending more on products that are less harmful to the environment. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We owe it to future generations to minimise our impact on the environment. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I usually try to buy environmentally conscious household products. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental issues are often overstated by the media. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q40 In the past 12 months, have you bought any major household appliances, e.g. a new refrigerator, freezer / fridge-freezer, washing machine, tumble dryer or dish washer?

- ☐ Yes, I did. (1)
- ☐ No, I haven't. I have looked at products but decided against buying a new one. (2)
- ☐ No, I haven't and I haven't considered buying one. (3)

Q62 What is your age?

- ☐ Under 17 years (1)
- ☐ 18 to 21 years (2)
- ☐ 22 to 25 years (3)
- ☐ 26 to 29 years (4)
- ☐ 30 to 33 years (5)
- ☐ 34 to 44 years (6)
- ☐ 45 to 54 years (7)
- ☐ 55 years or over (8)

Q46 What is your gender?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Other (3)

Q55 Which nationality do you identify with primarily?

| *Note: Blank text field accepting all letters as input*

Q64 Which country is currently your main country of residence?

- ☐ United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (47)
- ☐ United States of America (48)

- ☐ Albania (1)
- ☐ Andorra (2)
- ☐ Austria (3)
- ☐ Belarus (4)
- ☐ Belgium (5)
- ☐ Bosnia and Herzegovina (6)
- ☐ Bulgaria (7)
- ☐ Canada (8)
- ☐ Croatia (9)
- ☐ Czech Republic (10)
- ☐ Denmark (11)
- ☐ Estonia (12)
- ☐ Finland (13)
- ☐ France (14)
- ☐ Georgia (15)
- ☐ Germany (16)
- ☐ Greece (17)
- ☐ Hungary (18)
- ☐ Iceland (19)
- ☐ Ireland (20)
- ☐ Israel (21)
- ☐ Italy (22)
- ☐ Latvia (23)
- ☐ Liechtenstein (24)
- ☐ Lithuania (25)
- ☐ Luxembourg (26)
- ☐ Malta (27)
- ☐ Monaco (28)
- ☐ Montenegro (29)
- ☐ Netherlands (30)
- ☐ Norway (31)
- ☐ Poland (32)
- ☐ Portugal (33)
- ☐ Republic of Moldova (34)
- ☐ Romania (35)
- ☐ Russian Federation (36)
- ☐ San Marino (37)
- ☐ Serbia (38)
- ☐ Slovakia (39)
- ☐ Slovenia (40)
- ☐ Spain (41)
- ☐ Sweden (42)
- ☐ Switzerland (43)
- ☐ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (44)
- ☐ Turkey (45)
- ☐ Ukraine (46)

Q59 How often do you follow politics in the news (on the internet, on television, on the radio or in daily papers)?

- ☐ Every day (1)
- ☐ Several times a week (2)
- ☐ Once or twice a week (3)
- ☐ Less often (4)
- ☐ Never (5)
- ☐ Don't know (6)

Answer if outgroup is Not Equal to 1

Q45 Generally speaking, would you say that your country of residence benefits or does not benefit from being in the European Union?

- ☐ Greatly benefits (1)
- ☐ Largely benefits (2)
- ☐ Somewhat benefits (3)
- ☐ Benefits only a little (4)
- ☐ Does not benefit at all (5)

Q44 Would you agree or disagree with the following statement?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
"Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off." (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers." (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth." (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"There is one law for the rich and one for the poor." (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q46 In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?

- ☐ Very positive (1)
- ☐ Fairly positive (2)
- ☐ Neutral (3)
- ☐ Fairly negative (4)
- ☐ Very negative (5)

Q42 In your opinion, what was the aim of this survey?

Q43 Did you notice a political symbol or flag in the images used in this study?

Q48 Thank you for participating in this study. The object of this study was to help us understand how the inclusion of the EU symbol in everyday situations, like on energy labels, might affect how different people are more or less likely to trust information. One half of participants will have seen an energy label with an EU symbol on it and the other half will have seen a label with no EU symbol. No mention was made of the EU in the survey itself so that any views that participants might already hold about the EU would not affect their answers. We are very grateful for your participation in this exciting new research. We would welcome any comments that you might have and would be happy to provide feedback on the results and any publications which follow.

Q77 Among all participants 1 x £50 Amazon UK vouchers will be given away. If you would like the opportunity to win one of the vouchers, please enter your email address here:

Note: Blank text field accepting email addresses as input

Q78 All email addresses will be deleted after the conclusion of the experiment, and will only be used for the purpose of the voucher giveaway. Winners will be contacted within 10 days of the conclusion of the study.

Q49 Do you have any comments for the researcher? (optional)

Appendix B2.: Experimental Design – Questionnaire (German)

Note: This version of the questionnaire is exported from the Qualtrics software package, showing the design employed in the second experimental intervention (UK sample). The formatting has been adapted to better suit a print format. Timing measurements that were neither visible to participants nor used in the final analysis have been removed. All of these layout changes are marked throughout this survey by annotations. Note that not all of the following questions were displayed to participants. For more information, please see Appendix B3. Measurement Display Logic.

Flags And Fridges – Sample II DE - German

Q2 Willkommen!

Herzlichen Dank für Ihr Interesse an dieser Studie zu Kühlschränken und Politiki!

Im Verlauf dieser Studie werden Ihnen einige Fragen zu Haushaltsgeräten und ihrem Energieverbrauch gestellt, ebenso wie einige allgemeinere Fragen. Nicht alle Teilnehmer werden die gleichen Fragen sehen. Diese Umfrage wird ca 10-15 Minuten Ihrer Zeit in Anspruch nehmen. Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen entsprechend den angezeigten Anweisungen.

Unter allen Teilnehmern wird 1 x €50 Amazon Gutschein verlost. Bitte beachten Sie, dass Sie jederzeit Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Umfrage abbrechen können; Bedingung für die Teilnahme an der Verlosung ist jedoch das vollständige Ausfüllen des Fragebogens.

Bei dieser Umfrage gibt es keine richtigen und falschen Antworten - bitte lassen Sie uns einfach Ihre Meinung wissen. Alle Ihre Antworten werden vertraulich behandelt; sie werden nicht zu kommerziellen Zwecken und nicht zur Vermarktung von Produkten an Sie benutzt. Die gesammelten Daten werden nicht in individuell identifizierbarer Weise veröffentlicht (weitere Informationen).

Mit einem Klick auf Start erklären Sie sich mit diesen Bedingungen einverstanden. Falls Sie Unterstützung in irgendeiner Form benötigen oder uns anderweitig kontaktieren wollen, können Sie dies per Email unter philipp.heinrich@ed.ac.uk.

Bitte klicken Sie auf „Start“ um die Umfrage zu beginnen.

Weitere Informationen

Note: Above link highlights below segment

Vertraulichkeitsvereinbarung

Alle von Teilnehmern gesammelten Daten werden vertraulich behandelt und ausschließlich in aggregiertem Format weitergegeben; einzelne Angaben individueller Teilnehmer werden nicht veröffentlicht. Alle gespeicherten Antworten sind nur den unten genannten Forschern zugänglich. Die Datensätze werden in einer HIPPA-konformen Datenbank von Qualtrics gesichert gespeichert, bis sie vom Forscherteam gelöscht wird.

Teilnahme

Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist freiwillig. Sie können zu jeder Zeit Ihre Teilnahme zurückziehen. Schließen Sie in diesem Fall bitte einfach Ihren Internet Browser.

Fragen zur Studie

Dieses Survey-Experiment ist Teil eines laufenden PhD-Forschungsprojekt an der School of Social and Political Science der University of Edinburgh, UK. Falls Sie weitere Fragen zu dieser Studie haben, können Sie gerne mit dem verantwortlichen Doktoranden, Philipp Heinrich, unter philipp.heinrich@ed.ac.uk in Kontakt treten.

Fragen zu Ihren Rechten als Studienteilnehmer

Falls Sie weitere Fragen haben, die Sie nicht an den verantwortlichen Doktoranden richten wollen, können Sie ebenfalls mit Prof Laura Cram unter laura.cram@ed.ac.uk in Kontakt treten.

Q4 Gerne würden wir, worauf Konsumenten beim Kauf von elektrischen Haushalts- und Küchengeräten, z.B. Kühlschränken, besonders achten. Bitte schauen Sie sich die folgenden Bilder genau an und beantworten Sie die Fragen zu dem angezeigten Produkt.

Q59 Bitte sehen Sie sich dieses Bild genau an.



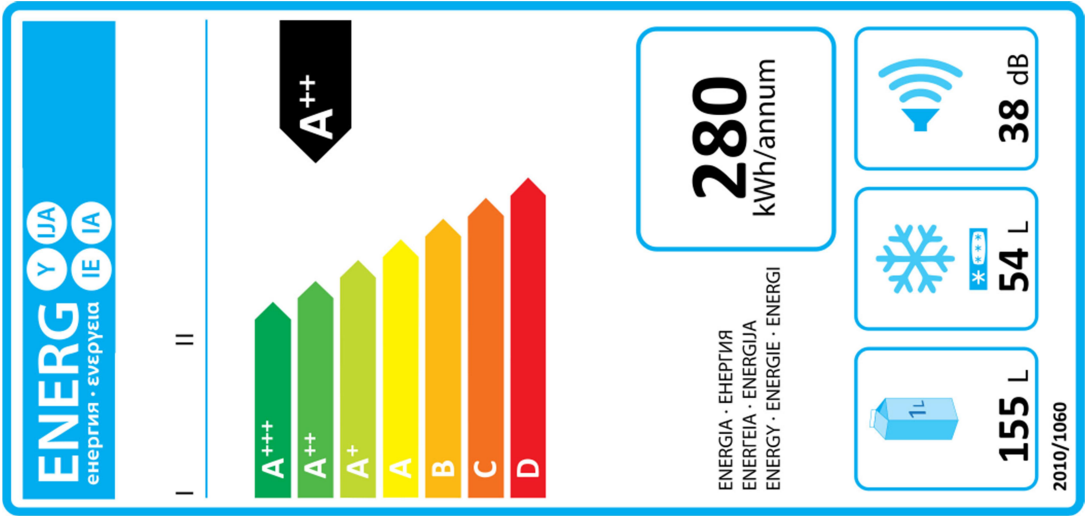
Q60 Bitte sehen Sie sich dieses Bild genau an.



Q63 Das folgende Bild zeigt das vorherige Label zum Energieverbrauch im Detail.

Note: Picture size reduced.

Q57



Q22 Bitte bewerten Sie Ihre allgemeinen Eindrücke zu diesem Kühlschrank-Modell:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Nicht zufriedenstellend: Zufriedenstellend (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schlecht: Gut (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hässlich: Schön (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negativ: Positiv (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unangenehm: Angenehm (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht sicher: Sicher (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gewöhnlich: Einzigartig (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattraktiv: Attraktiv (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nutzlos: Nützlich (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geringe Qualität: Hohe Qualität (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q58



Q23 Wie würden Sie die Funktion dieses Produkts bewerten?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unpraktisch: Praktisch (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnötig: Notwendig (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht funktionell: Funktionell (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sinnlos: Sinnvoll (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht hilfreich: Hilfreich (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffizient: Effizient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schädlich: Nützlich (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht benutzerfreundlich: Benutzerfreundlich (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht problemlösend: Problemlösend (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht effektiv: Effektiv (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Q25 In Bezug auf das Produkt Design, würden Sie sagen dass Ihnen das Produkt ...**
- ☐ ...sehr gefällt (1)
 - ☐ ...ein bisschen gefällt (2)
 - ☐ ...wenig gefällt. (3)
 - ☐ ...gar nicht gefällt. (4)
 - ☐ ...weiß ich nicht. (5)

Q28 Was wären Sie bereit maximal für das gezeigte Modell zu bezahlen?

- ☐ Weniger als £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ Mehr als £2000 (6)

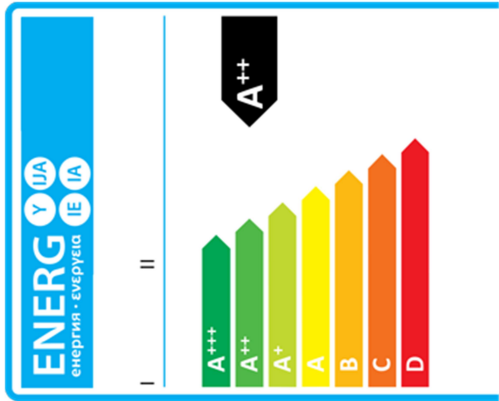
Q29 Wie hoch schätzen Sie den tatsächlichen Verkaufspreis für dieses Modell ein?

- ☐ Weniger als £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ Mehr als £2000 (6)

Q30 Wenn Sie heute einen Kühlschrank kaufen würden, würden Sie dieses Modell in die engere Auswahl nehmen?

- ☐ Dies wäre das einzige Modell, das ich in Betracht ziehen würde. (1)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre meine erste Wahl, aber ich würde evtl. auch andere Modelle in Betracht ziehen. (2)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre ok, aber ich würde es nicht zwangsläufig auswählen. (3)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell nur auswählen, wenn es wenig Auswahl gäbe. (4)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell wahrscheinlich nicht auswählen. (5)

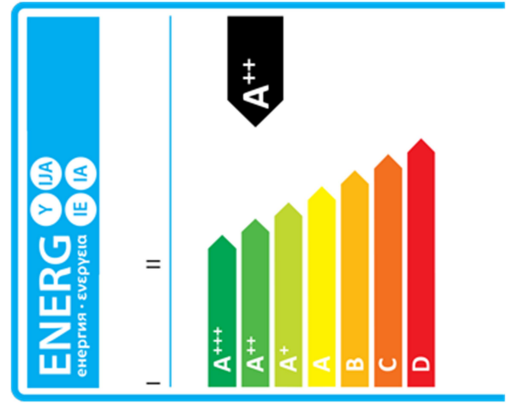
Q59



Q82 Bitte bewerten Sie Ihre allgemeinen Eindrücke zu diesem Kühlschrank:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Nicht zufriedenstellend: Zufriedenstellend (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schlecht: Gut (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hässlich: Schön (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negativ: Positiv (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unangenehm: Angenehm (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht sicher: Sicher (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gewöhnlich: Einzigartig (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattraktiv: Attraktiv (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nutzlos: Nützlich (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geringe Qualität: Hohe Qualität (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q60



Q83 Wie würden Sie die Funktion dieses Produkts bewerten?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unpraktisch:Praktisch (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnötig:Notwendig (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht funktionell:Funktionell (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sinnlos:Sinnvoll (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht hilfreich:Hilfreich (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffizient:Effizient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schädlich:Nützlich (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht benutzerfreundlich:Benutzerfreundlich (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht problemlösend:Problemlösend (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht effektiv:Effektiv (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q84 In Bezug auf das Produkt Design, würden Sie sagen dass Ihnen das Produkt ...

- ☐ ...sehr gefällt. (1)
- ☐ ...ein bisschen gefällt. (2)
- ☐ ...wenig gefällt. (3)
- ☐ ...gar nicht gefällt. (4)
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht. (5)

Q85 Was wären Sie bereit maximal für das gezeigte Modell zu bezahlen?

- ☐ Weniger als €100 (1)
- ☐ €100-£249 (2)
- ☐ €250-£499 (3)
- ☐ €500-£999 (4)
- ☐ €1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ mehr als €2000 (6)

Q86 Wie hoch schätzen Sie den tatsächlichen Verkaufspreis für dieses Modell ein?

- ☐ Weniger als €100 (1)
- ☐ €100-£249 (2)
- ☐ €250-£499 (3)
- ☐ €500-£999 (4)
- ☐ €1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ mehr als €2000 (6)

Q87 Wenn Sie heute einen Kühlschrank kaufen würden, würden Sie dieses Modell in die engere Auswahl nehmen?

- ☐ Dies wäre das einzige Modell, das ich in Betracht ziehen würde. (1)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre meine erste Wahl, aber ich würde evtl. auch andere Modelle in Betracht ziehen. (2)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre ok, aber ich würde es nicht zwangsläufig auswählen. (3)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell nur auswählen, wenn es wenig Auswahl gäbe. (4)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell wahrscheinlich nicht auswählen. (5)

Q9 Bitte sehen Sie sich dieses Bild genau an.



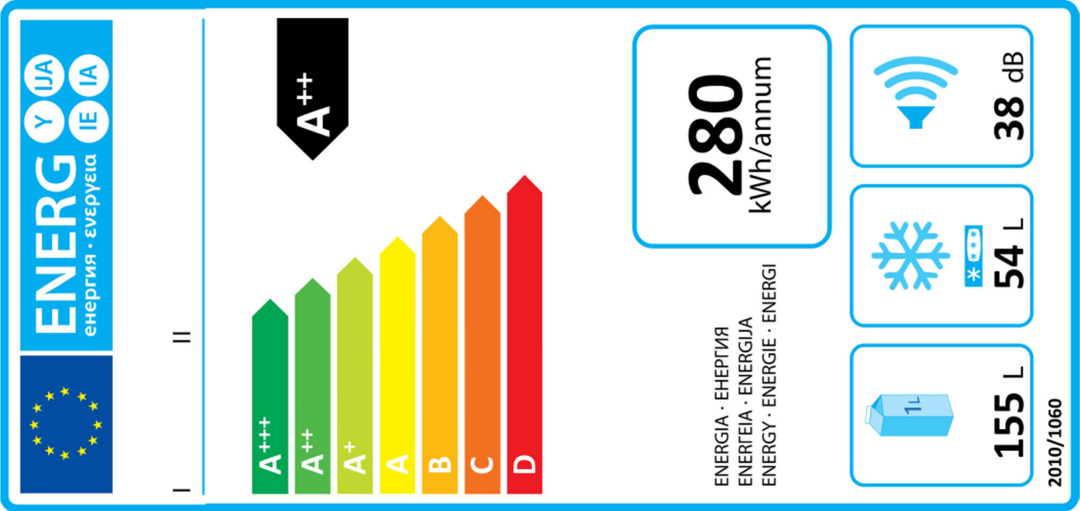
Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q15 Bitte sehen Sie sich dieses Bild genau an.



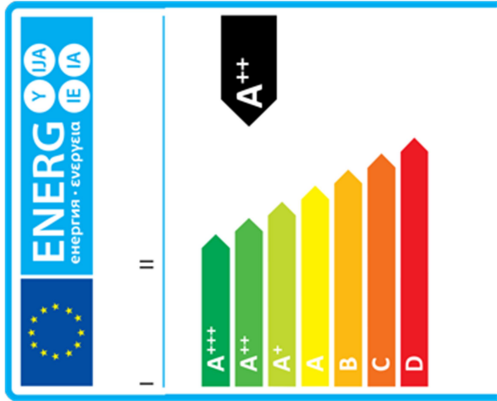
Note: Timing Measurement removed
Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q10 Das folgende Bild zeigt das vorherige Label zum Energieverbrauch im Detail.



| Note: Reduced image size

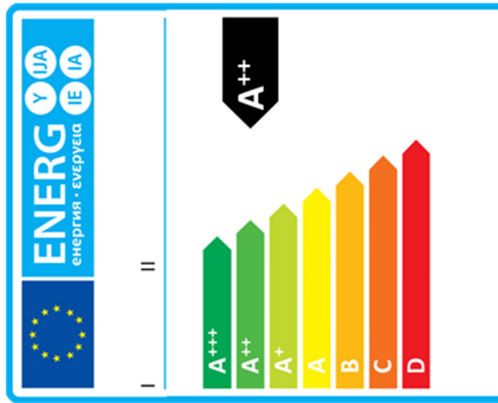
Q103



Q104 Bitte bewerten Sie Ihre allgemeinen Eindrücke zu diesem Kühlschrank:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Nicht zufriedenstellend: Zufriedenstellend (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schlecht: Gut (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hässlich: Schön (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negativ: Positiv (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unangenehm: Angenehm (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht sicher: Sicher (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gewöhnlich: Einzigartig (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattraktiv: Attraktiv (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nutzlos: Nützlich (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geringe Qualität: Hohe Qualität (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q105



Q106 Wie würden Sie die Funktion dieses Produkts bewerten?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unpraktisch:Praktisch (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnötig:Notwendig (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht funktionell:Funktionell (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sinnlos:Sinnvoll (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht hilfreich:Hilfreich (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffizient:Effizient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schädlich:Nützlich (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht benutzerfreundlich:Benutzerfreundlich (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht problemlösend:Problemlösend (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht effektiv:Effektiv (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q107 In Bezug auf das Produkt Design, würden Sie sagen dass Ihnen das Produkt ...

- ☐ ...sehr gefällt. (1)
- ☐ ...ein bisschen gefällt. (2)
- ☐ ...wenig gefällt. (3)
- ☐ ...gar nicht gefällt. (4)
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht. (5)

Q108 Was wären Sie bereit maximal für das gezeigte Modell zu bezahlen?

- ☐ Weniger als £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ Mehr als £2000 (6)

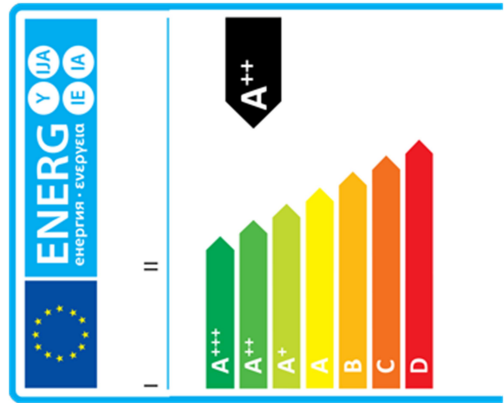
Q109 Wie hoch schätzen Sie den tatsächlichen Verkaufspreis für dieses Modell ein?

- ☐ Weniger als £100 (1)
- ☐ £100-£249 (2)
- ☐ £250-£499 (3)
- ☐ £500-£999 (4)
- ☐ £1000-£1999 (5)
- ☐ Mehr als £2000 (6)

Q110 Wenn Sie heute einen Kühlschrank kaufen würden, würden Sie dieses Modell in die engere Auswahl nehmen?

- ☐ Dies wäre das einzige Modell, das ich in Betracht ziehen würde. (1)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre meine erste Wahl, aber ich würde evtl. auch andere Modelle in Betracht ziehen. (2)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre ok, aber ich würde es nicht zwangsläufig auswählen. (3)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell nur auswählen, wenn es wenig Auswahl gäbe. (4)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell wahrscheinlich nicht auswählen. (5)

Q111



Q112 Bitte bewerten Sie Ihre allgemeinen Eindrücke zu diesem Kühlschrank:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Nicht zufriedenstellend: Zufriedenstellend (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schlecht: Gut (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hässlich: Schön (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negativ: Positiv (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unangenehm: Angenehm (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht sicher: Sicher (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gewöhnlich: Ungewöhnlich (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unattraktiv: Attraktiv (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nutzlos: Nützlich (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geringe Qualität: Hohe Qualität (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q113



Q115 In Bezug auf das Produkt Design, würden Sie sagen dass Ihnen das Produkt ...

- ☐ ...sehr gefällt. (1)
- ☐ ...ein bisschen gefällt. (2)
- ☐ ...wenig gefällt. (3)
- ☐ ...gar nicht gefällt. (4)
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht. (5)

Q116 Was wären Sie bereit maximal für das gezeigte Modell zu bezahlen?

- ☐ Weniger als €100 (1)
- ☐ €100-€249 (2)
- ☐ €250-€499 (3)
- ☐ €500-€999 (4)
- ☐ €1000-€1999 (5)
- ☐ Mehr als €2000 (6)

Q117 Wie hoch schätzen Sie den tatsächlichen Verkaufspreis für dieses Modell ein?

- ☐ Weniger als €100 (1)
- ☐ €100-€249 (2)
- ☐ €250-€499 (3)
- ☐ €500-€999 (4)
- ☐ €1000-€1999 (5)
- ☐ Mehr als €2000 (6)

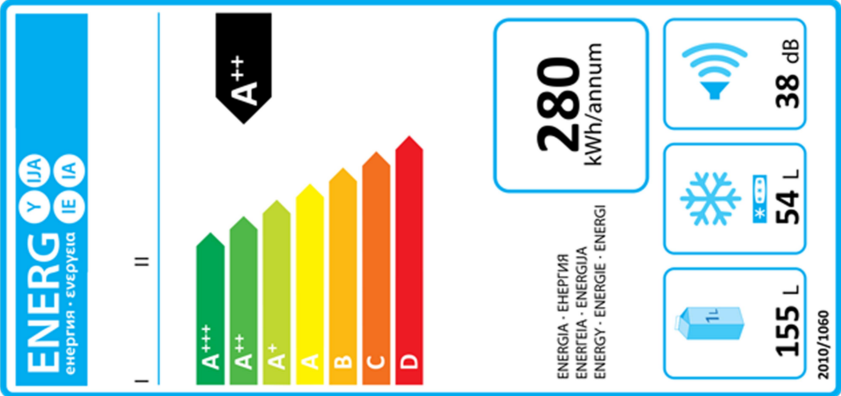
Q114 Wie würden Sie die Funktion dieses Produkts bewerten?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Unpraktisch:Praktisch (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unnötig:Notwendig (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht funktionell:Funktionell (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sinnlos:Sinnvoll (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht hilfreich:Hilfreich (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ineffizient:Effizient (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schädlich:Nützlich (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht benutzerfreundlich:Benutzerfreundlich (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nicht problemlösend:Problemlösend (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unwirksam:Wirkungsvoll (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q118 Wenn Sie heute einen Kühlschrank kaufen würden, würden Sie dieses Modell in die engere Auswahl nehmen?

- ☐ Dies wäre das einzige Modell, das ich in Betracht ziehen würde. (1)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre meine erste Wahl, aber ich würde evtl. auch andere Modelle in Betracht ziehen. (2)
- ☐ Dieses Modell wäre ok, aber ich würde es nicht zwangsläufig auswählen. (3)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell nur auswählen, wenn es wenig Auswahl gäbe. (4)
- ☐ Ich würde dieses Modell wahrscheinlich nicht auswählen. (5)

Q64 Hier sehen Sie noch einmal das Energie-Siegel mit Details zur Energieeffizienz des obigen Produkts.

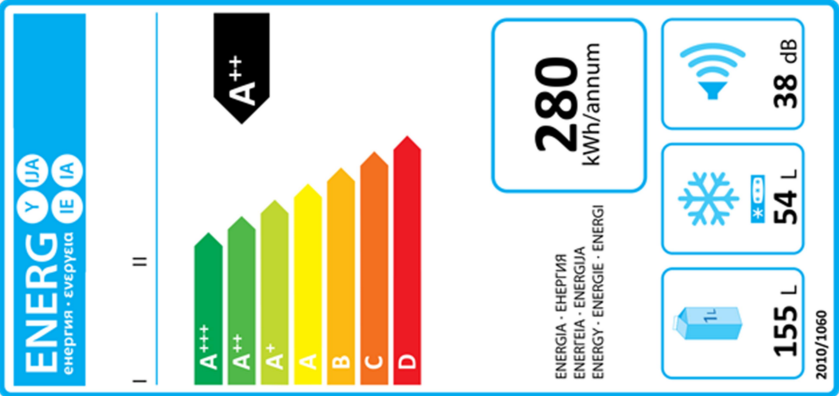


Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q65 In Anbetracht der obigen Informationen, würden Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder nicht?

	Stimme nicht zu (1)	Stimme eher nicht zu (2)	Weder noch (3)	Stimme eher zu (4)	Stimme zu (5)
Das Energie-Effizienz Siegel ist nützlich für mich. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Das Energie-Effizienz Siegel ist Teil der Produktwerbung. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich würde dieses Produkt einem konkurrierenden Produkt ohne Siegel vorziehen. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass Hersteller das Siegel nutzen um ihr Produkt besser aussehen zu lassen. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich erwarte, dass die Informationen zum Energieverbrauch auf diesem Siegel korrekt sind. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q66 Bitte sehen Sie sich das Energie-Siegel noch einmal an, bevor sie die folgende Frage beantworten.

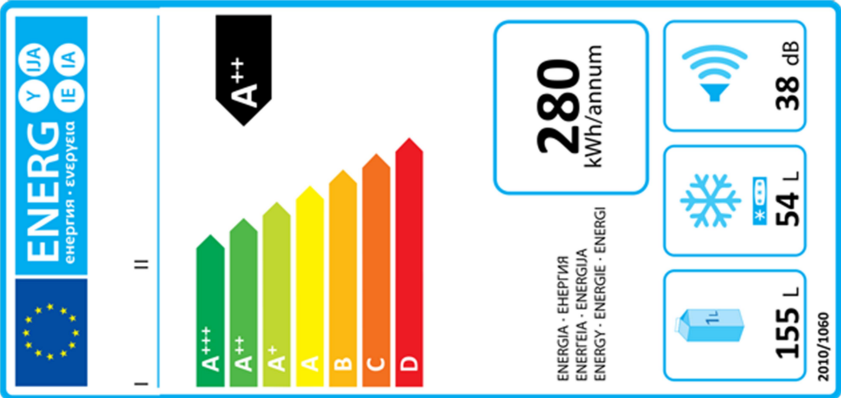


Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q67 Der Hersteller ist gesetzlich dazu verpflichtet, das Energie-Siegel auf der vorigen Seite an seinen Produkten zu zeigen. Im Hinblick darauf, würden Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I think it is good that manufacturers have to provide this data. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public institutions should be more involved in consumer protection. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The energy consumption label looks very confusing to me. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulation like this drives prices up for consumers. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust public institutions to do a good job controlling that the data on the label is accurate. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 Hier sehen Sie noch einmal das Energie-Siegel mit Details zur Energieeffizienz des obigen Produkts.



Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q13 In Anbetracht der obigen Informationen, würden Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder nicht?

	Stimme nicht zu (1)	Stimme eher nicht zu (2)	Weder noch (3)	Stimme eher zu (4)	Stimme zu (5)
Das Energie-Effizienz Siegel ist nützlich für mich. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Das Energie-Effizienz Siegel ist Teil der Produktwerbung. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich würde dieses Produkt einem konkurrierenden Produkt ohne Siegel vorziehen. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass Hersteller das Siegel nutzen um ihr Produkt besser aussehen zu lassen. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich erwarte, dass die Informationen zum Energieverbrauch auf diesem Siegel korrekt sind. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q35 Bitte sehen Sie sich das Energie-Siegel noch einmal an, bevor sie die folgende Frage beantworten.



Note: Timing Measurement removed

Q36 Der Hersteller ist gesetzlich dazu verpflichtet, das Energie-Siegel auf der vorigen Seite an seinen Produkten zu zeigen. Im Hinblick darauf, stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu oder nicht?

	Stimme nicht zu (1)	Stimme eher nicht zu (2)	Weder noch (3)	Stimme eher zu (4)	Stimme zu (5)
Ich glaube es ist gut, dass Hersteller diese Angaben veröffentlichten müssen. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staatliche Institutionen sollten sich stärker für Verbraucherschutz engagieren. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Das Energie-Effizienz Siegel sieht verwirrend aus. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vorschriften wie diese lassen die Preise für Verbraucher steigen. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staatliche Institutionen leisten eine gute Arbeit bei der Kontrolle, ob die Angaben auf dem Energie-Effizient Siegel korrekt sind. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q37 Um diese Informationen besser einzuordnen, würden wir gerne zum Schluss mehr über Sie und Ihre Meinung zu Energie-Effizienz erfahren.

Q39 Stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu oder nicht?

	Stimme nicht zu (1)	Stimme eher nicht zu (2)	Weder noch (3)	Stimme eher zu (4)	Stimme zu (5)
Informationen zur Energie-Effizienz von Produkten zu haben ist wichtig für mich. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Es ist wert für weniger umweltschädliche Produkte mehr auszugeben. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wir sind es zukünftigen Generationen schuldig, unseren Einfluss auf die Umwelt zu minimieren. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich kaufe normalerweise umweltbewusste Haushaltsprodukte. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Umweltprobleme werden von den Medien häufig übertrieben dargestellt. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q40 Haben Sie in den vergangenen 12 Monaten größere Haushaltsgeräte gekauft, z.B. einen neuen Kühlschrank, Gefrierschrank, eine Waschmaschine, Geschirrspülmaschine oder einen Wäschetrockner?

- ☐ Ja, habe ich. (1)
- ☐ Nein - ich habe mir Produkte angeschaut, aber mich gegen den Kauf entschieden. (2)
- ☐ Nein, habe ich nicht - und ich habe auch keinen Kauf in Erwägung gezogen. (3)

Q62 Wie alt sind Sie?

- ☐ Jünger als 18 Jahre (1)
- ☐ 18 bis 21 Jahre (2)
- ☐ 22 bis 25 Jahre (3)
- ☐ 26 bis 29 Jahre (4)
- ☐ 30 bis 33 Jahre (5)
- ☐ 34 bis 44 Jahre (6)
- ☐ 45 bis 54 Jahre (7)
- ☐ Älter als 54 Jahre (8)

Q46 Sind Sie...

- ☐ ...männlich (1)
- ☐ ...weiblich (2)
- ☐ Sonstig / keine Angabe (3)

Q55 Mit welcher Nationalität identifizieren Sie sich in erster Linie?

| *Note: Blank text field accepting all letters as input*

Q64 In welchem Land leben Sie zur Zeit hauptsächlich?

- ☐ Albanien (1)
- ☐ Andorra (2)
- ☐ Österreich (3)
- ☐ Weißrussland (4)
- ☐ Belgien (5)
- ☐ Bosnien und Herzegowina (6)
- ☐ Bulgarien (7)
- ☐ Kanada (8)
- ☐ Kroatien (9)
- ☐ Tschechische Republik (10)
- ☐ Dänemark (11)
- ☐ Estland (12)
- ☐ Finnland (13)
- ☐ Frankreich (14)
- ☐ Georgien (15)
- ☐ Deutschland (16)
- ☐ Griechenland (17)
- ☐ Ungarn (18)
- ☐ Island (19)
- ☐ Irland (20)
- ☐ Israel (21)
- ☐ Italien (22)
- ☐ Lettland (23)
- ☐ Liechtenstein (24)
- ☐ Litauen (25)
- ☐ Luxemburg (26)
- ☐ Malta (27)
- ☐ Monaco (28)
- ☐ Montenegro (29)
- ☐ Niederlande (30)
- ☐ Norwegen (31)
- ☐ Polen (32)
- ☐ Portugal (33)
- ☐ Moldawien (34)
- ☐ Rumänien (35)
- ☐ Russland (36)
- ☐ San Marino (37)
- ☐ Serbien (38)
- ☐ Slowakei (39)
- ☐ Slowenien (40)
- ☐ Spanien (41)
- ☐ Schweden (42)
- ☐ Schweiz (43)
- ☐ Mazedonien (44)
- ☐ Türkei (45)
- ☐ Ukraine (46)

- ☐ Vereinigtes Königreich von Großbritannien und Nordirland (47)
- ☐ USA (48)

Q59 Wie häufig verfolgen Sie politische Nachrichten (im Internet, im TV, im Radio oder in der Tagespresse)?

- ☐ Täglich (1)
- ☐ Mehrmals wöchentlich (2)
- ☐ Einmal pro Woche (3)
- ☐ Weniger häufig (4)
- ☐ Nie (5)
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht (6)

Answer If outgroup Is Not Equal to 1
Q45 Hat Ihrer Meinung nach das Land, in dem Sie leben, insgesamt gesehen durch die Mitgliedschaft in der EU profitiert?

- ☐ Hat enorm viel profitiert (1)
- ☐ Hat viel profitiert (2)
- ☐ Hat ein bisschen profitiert (3)
- ☐ Hat wenig profitiert (4)
- ☐ Hat überhaupt nicht profitiert (5)

Q44 Würden Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder nicht?

	Stimme nicht zu (1)	Stimme eher nicht zu (2)	Weder noch (3)	Stimme eher zu (4)	Stimme zu (5)
"Die Regierung sollte Einkommen von den Reichen zu den Armen umverteilen." (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"An Großkonzernen profitieren die Besitzer zu Lasten von Arbeitnehmern" (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Durchschnittliche Arbeitnehmer bekommen keinen fairen Anteil am Reichtum im Land." (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Reiche müssen nicht die gleichen Gesetze wie Arme befolgen." (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Answer If outgroup Is Not Equal to 1

Q46 Ganz allgemein gesprochen, ruft die EU bei Ihnen ein sehr positives, ziemlich positives, weder positives noch negatives, ziemlich negatives oder sehr negatives Bild hervor?

- ☐ Sehr positiv (1)
- ☐ Ziemlich positiv (2)
- ☐ Weder positiv noch negativ (3)
- ☐ Ziemlich negativ (4)
- ☐ Sehr negativ (5)

Q42 Ihrer Meinung nach, was war das Ziel dieser Umfrage?

Q43 Haben Sie auf den Bildern in dieser Umfrage politische Symbole oder Flaggen bemerkt?

Q48 Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie. Das Ziel dieser Umfrage war uns zu helfen herauszufinden, inwiefern EU Symbole in alltäglichem Kontext - z.B. auf dem Energie-Effizienz Siegel - Einfluss darauf haben können, ob Menschen bestimmten Informationen mehr oder weniger vertrauen. Die Hälfte der Teilnehmer hat dabei ein Energie-Siegel mit EU Flagge gesehen, die andere Hälfte ein Siegel ohne EU Flagge. Wir sind sehr dankbar für Ihre Teilnahme an diesem Forschungsprojekt. Über Anmerkungen und Kommentare würden wir uns sehr freuen; gerne stehen wir mit weiteren Informationen zu diesem Projekt und seinen Ergebnissen zur Verfügung.

Q77 Unter allen Teilnehmern wird 1 x €50 Amazon DE Gutschein verlost. Falls Sie an dieser Verlosung teilnehmen wollen, hinterlassen Sie bitte hier Ihre E-Mail Adresse:

Q78 Alle E-Mail Adressen werden nach Abschluss des Experiments gelöscht und ausschließlich zur Verlosung des Gutscheins verwendet. Gewinner werden innerhalb von 10 Tagen nach Abschluss der Umfrage kontaktiert.

Q49 Haben Sie weitere Anmerkungen zu diesem Projekt? (optional)

Note: Blank text field accepting email addresses as input